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EXTRACTS FROM AND ABRIDGMENTS OF

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OF

Practical Divinity

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IN THIRTY VOLUMES:

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1750, IN FIFTY VOLUMES, DUODECIMO.

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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EXTRACTS

FROM

The Lives

OF

SUNDRY EMINENT PERSONS.

VOL. XXIX.

B

THE LIFE
OF
MR. THOMAS WILSON.

CHAPTER I.

His Birth, Education at School and University.

THOMAS WILSON was born at Catterlen in Cumberland, in the year 1601. His parents were sober and honest, and of a competent estate. As soon as his age would permit, he was sent to School at Blentow, in the said county; where, under MR. WILKINSON, his School-master, he profited beyond expectation, and far excelled all his fellows.

His great proficiency at School, encouraged his parents to send him to the University before he was seventeen; where, at Christ's College in Cambridge, he devoted himself wholly to his study: And though he did employ his time most there, about academical learning; yet he did not neglect Divinity; but in order to his serving God in the Ministry, (if He saw fit,) read both positive and polemical authors: But of all books, none was so dear to him, or read so much by him, as the Holy Scriptures; for as the great Apostle saith of TIMOTHY, I may say of him, "From a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make men wise to salvation."

Some time after he had commenced Bachelor of Arts, he was removed from the University. MR. JOHN BRISTOW, Minister of Chawswood in Surrey, desired MR. MEAD (that eminent person for piety and learning) his Tutor, to send him an able religious Scholar, to teach school in his house. MR. MEAD pitched upon MR. WILSON, not know-

ing how to please Mr. BRISTOW better, and glad he could answer his request so well.

At Mr. BRISTOW'S he continued four years, instructing the lads committed to his charge, with great diligence and faithfulness; and gave his scholars more cause to bless God for their education under him, than SOCRATES did PLATO for his bringing up under such a master. He hath sometimes told me, that he knew no calling, except the Ministry, wherein a man might be so serviceable to God, as in teaching youth. And it is clear, that often lads are made men at school; if there they suck in ill principles, it will be hard to remove them; if good, they continue with them. But Mr. BRISTOW observing Mr. WILSON'S ability for a greater work, and how his heart was set upon the Ministry, (to prepare himself for which he made use of all his vacant hours from the school) did not judge it convenient to deprive the church any longer of so worthy a labourer; and therefore though it were a considerable loss to himself and his parish, to forego so good a man, yet he preferred the public advantage to his own, and wished Mr. WILSON to betake himself wholly to preach.

CHAPTER II.

His Living in Surrey and Hampshire, and Journey into Cumberland.

THE first candlestick in which this light was set, was Capel in Surrey, where he continued some time, directing others by his holy pattern and diligent preaching. Though the parish gave him little or nothing for his pains, yet he was never the less faithful and laborious, for "he sought not theirs, but them." Here he had the love of all godly persons, both Ministers and people round about; and indeed by his heavenly humble conversation, he was such a loadstone, as wherever he came he drew the hearts of sober Christians after him.

He continued not long at Capel, but removed to Farlington in Hampshire, an ignorant heathenish place, which he endeavoured so long as he stayed with them, to instruct and reform. Though there was little of religion in his parishioners, yet whilst he abode there the Church was much frequented, and when he was called thence he was much bewailed.

His next change was to Teddington, near Kingston-upon-Thames, in which place he continued some years, and through the blessing of God with great success, and much acceptance amongst them that feared the LORD. During his abode at Teddington, he (being twenty-six years of age) had a desire to visit his native country, where his relations and friends lived; and it pleased God so to assist him in his labours amongst them, that his journey became profitable for the conversion of many.

While he was in Cumberland, he was requested to preach in Penrith, a great market town, where (time out of mind) there had been a considerable market for all sorts of food every LORD'S-day, till nine in the morning. But after he had preached two or three sermons, he prevailed so far with the Ministers, and others of the town, that it was proclaimed on Tuesday, their weekly market-day, That no person for the time to come, should bring any victuals or ware whatsoever, to be sold on the LORD'S-day, but that Saturday should be the time for the sale of their commodities.



CHAPTER III.

His Removal into Kent, with his Success and Troubles there.

His next removal was from Teddington to Otham, near Maidstone. The occasion was this: There were many serious Christians in Maidstone, much troubled at the

deadness and dulness of that Ministry under which they lived. The children asked “bread,” and their spiritual Father (by profession and office) gave them “stones,” that their souls were ready to famish. Whereupon **MR. ROBERT SWINNOCK**, an active person, one of the Aldermen of the town, got the Presentation of Otham, upon the death of the Incumbent, and consulted with his friends how he might procure an able Minister for that place. In pursuance of this they repaired to London, where they heard of **MR. WILSON**, to whom they presently took their journey, and heard him preach at Darking, in Surrey. After sermon they acquainted him with the cause of their coming, and the sad condition of the people in those parts where they lived, and desired him to accept the Presentation of Otham : He who was never hasty, especially in matters of such weight, asked the judgment of his neighbour Ministers in the country, and others of London, who did concur in this, that in regard of the necessities of those that feared God about Maidstone, and the great opportunity he should enjoy there of doing good to many, he ought to embrace the call. • Upon the declaration of their opinion he was presented to Otham, where the **LORD** was pleased to prosper his Ministry, for the conversion and edification of many.

He was one that did “divide the word aright, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, a **BOANERGES**, a son of thunder,” in preaching the law, to awaken secure senseless sinners. Many an one hath come to him, as the Gaoler to the Apostle, trembling and crying out, “What shall I do to be saved?” To whom he was a “**BARNABAS**, a son of consolation,” and could so display the exceeding abundant riches of Divine grace in the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, as to draw their hearts to a cheerful compliance with, and hearty acceptance of it. He as “a faithful Steward, gave every one his portion,” terror to whom terror belonged, and comfort to whom comfort, whereby (the **HOLY GHOST** setting in with the word) a numerous issue were begotten to **CHRIST**. He preached there in “season and out of season ;”

not only twice every LORD's-day, but also every Holyday, and at funerals, though the persons interred were poor, and nothing could be expected for his pains.

Whilst he was Minister of Otham, many of Maidstone, and others several miles about, did ordinarily attend on his Ministry, and join in communion with him at the LORD's Supper; but the number that flocked after him (which was so great that his church would not hold them) was a great eye-sore to the profane world, and caused several of the Ministers about him to envy and malign him.

There was at Otham an ill custom, for the fulling mills to work every LORD's-day, but he convinced the owners so thoroughly of the unlawfulness thereof, that they suffered their mills to lie still on that day many years after he left them.

But the only wise God, who governeth the world, saw fit for some time to lay this useful person aside; for he had not been many years at Otham, before the book, commonly called the Book of Sports on the LORD's-day, came forth, and was presented to him, with a command, that he should publish it the next LORD's-day in his Church, which he refused to do, and upon his refusal was suspended; and his Cure committed to such persons as he could not own, or join with; which caused him to remove to Maidstone. To the Christians there he was a great help, whilst his suspension lasted; and from them he received some support for himself and family.

Whilst he was at Maidstone, he still was solicitous for the good of his people at Otham; and therefore to encourage them to unity, and a Gospel conversation; and also to convince his adversaries, who had causelessly traduced him to be an abettor of schisms and divisions: He wrote a letter to his Parish, wherein he exhorted them to fear the LORD and the King, and to walk in love, and not to nourish any dislike of Government, or contempt of those whom God had set over them: Which letter was read on a LORD's-day in his congregation by DR. TUCKE, without the

appointment of MR. WILSON. The tidings of this was soon carried to London, and gave such a distaste, that both MR. WILSON and DR. TUCKE were cited to appear before the High Commission Court: Both of them appeared several times to their great trouble and cost; and were, notwithstanding all they could allege in their own defence, forced to continue their attendance on the Court, for three years.

His suspension continued till the year 1639, about which time the Scots entering England, a Parliament was called; and Archbishop LAUD took off his suspension. But his sufferings were not at an end, for in the year 1640, Sept. 30, he and other Ministers were cited to appear at a Visitation of the Archbishop's at Feversham in Kent, to answer their not reading the Prayer against the Scots. Upon which they consulted together whether it were best to appear before the Vicar-general or no. It was urged by some, that the Parliament (whom they apprehended would be some relief and shelter to them) being to sit on the third of November, it was prudent for them to hold off at present; and in case they were cited afterwards to Canterbury, to appear only by a Proctor, and protract time as much as might be.

But upon a serious weighing the reasons for and against their appearing, it was concluded that they would appear, and submit to the will of God. MR. EDWARD BRIGHT, of Goodhurst, and MR. WILSON immediately repaired to the Inn, where SIR NATHANIEL BRENT, the Arch-deacon, and some inferior Officers sat. They no sooner appeared, but MR. BRIGHT was pointed out by one person to the Arch-deacon; who presently asked him his name, and whether he had read the Prayer against the Scots or no? MR. BRIGHT answered, No: Whereupon the Arch-deacon suspended him, without admonishing, or giving him any time to consider of it. Though MR. WILSON stood by, and perceived the service much hotter than he expected; yet he did not fly from his colours; but being asked, Whether he had read the Prayer? gave a negative answer,

with this reason: 'Because in the Rubrick it was enjoined, That no prayer should be publicly read, except those that were in the Book of Common Prayer; but this prayer against the Scots was not there.' This unexpected answer puzzled the Arch-deacon, and caused him to apply to SIR NATHANIEL BRENT, who upon information of MR. WILSON's reasons, very ingenuously left him to himself, and refused to meddle in it. Upon which the Arch-deacon proceeded more considerately with MR. WILSON than with MR. BRIGHT, and gave him fourteen days' time to consider of it, and then to appeal again at Canterbury, and answer it.

But the Archbishop had not done with MR. WILSON; for in March following, he was afresh prosecuted by him. Upon an holyday in that month he met at the Parsonage-house, after his sermon in public, with several friends, to repeat the sermon, and seek God by prayer. After the exercises were done, one knocked at the door, to which MRS. WILSON was going, but suddenly started back, fearing a messenger was come to apprehend her husband; but the messenger soon entered into the room, and putting off his hat, inquired which was MR. WILSON, pretending some private business with him. Though MR. WILSON was there in his gown, and thereby easily to be distinguished from others; yet God so ordered it, that the messenger observed him not. Soon after the messenger came into the room, MR. WILSON stepped behind one of his friends, and one MR. BUTCHER stepped forward, and told the messenger, that the room was his, and that he should look for MR. WILSON in his own rooms: Upon this he quickly withdrew into another room; in the interim MR. WILSON went up stairs into his study, and lay close till night, and then escaped to MR. GEORGE HALL's, at the Park in Maidstone. The Pursuivant looking about in vain, returns back into the parlour, into which he first entered, and missing one whom he had seen there before, inquires for him, charged all there présent that they had conveyed MR. WILSON away: He also produced his warrant, under the

hand of many Privy Councillors, whereof the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London were two, to attach the body of THOMAS WILSON, Rector of Otham, and bring him before them.

Before his departure, he said, he had been a messenger to the Council-table thirty-six years, and was never served so before. He confessed he heard him preach that day, and yet when he saw him so soon after, (and that in his gown,) he did not know him. But God had a hand in it. "Thy kingdom ruleth over all." He hath strange ways for the preservation of men.

CHAPTER IV.

His Removal to Maidstone.

HIS last remove was to Maidstone, where at last, by the good hand of God, he and the people of Maidstone, (who brought him first into Kent,) who were long before joined together in heart, were joined together in habitation, amongst whom he continued with much love and faithfulness, till God called him out of this world.

But though he left Otham, he did not leave off to care for the souls of his people there, but kept his title to the place still, and provided them a learned faithful man, to whom he gave the whole profits of his living.

When he had been some time at Maidstone, he took care about the reformation of the Church, and due administration of the Sacraments, according to the word of God; to which end, he first in his preaching discovered to them the necessity of Church ordinances and discipline; and then God accompanying his diligent endeavours, (notwithstanding the obstacles he met with, not only by the profane, but also some who professed the fear of God,) he brought it to a good issue, and put it in practice, to the great comfort of the godly.

On Saturday nights he would usually continue at his study very late, often till midnight, to prepare himself the better for his task on the LORD'S-day. On the LORD'S-day morning, he would rise by two or three, and was much displeased with himself, if at any time he did oversleep his hour. About seven he came down to his family, called all together, read some part of Scripture, expounded it, caused those present to give an account what they remembered of his exposition, sang some part of a Psalm, prayed with them, and concluded between eight and nine that they might all be ready to attend public ordinances. About nine he repaired to the Church, and commonly began with singing a Psalm, after which he prayed briefly for assistance in, and a blessing on, the ordinances of God; then he read some part of the Old Testament, and expounded (sometimes three or four, sometimes more verses) for the space of an hour. His custom was first to analyse the book, then the chapters, as he came to treat on them, then he gave the exposition of the verses which he handled. After he had delivered the several judgments of Expositors, he drew observations, which he very briefly illustrated and applied. I believe, if his expositions on the whole New Testament, and the far greater part of the Old, had been printed, it would have been more serviceable for the enabling ordinary Christians to understand the mind of God in his word, than any Comment extant. After he had expounded, he spent about an hour in the pulpit. When he came home to his family, he constantly went to prayer with them before dinner, and begged that the truths delivered, might be written by the SPIRIT of God upon all their hearts. After which he went to his study (eating little or no dinner usually) till after his family had dined; then he spent some time with them in singing and other religious exercises. In the afternoon in public he did as in the morning, only his exposition was then some part of the New Testament.

After the evening worship in public, many neighbours came to his house, where he called his family together, asked of them and others present, an account of his ser-

mons preached that day; most of them present would speak somewhat, whom he would help and encourage. Hereby their understandings and memories were much advantaged, for they knowing beforehand his custom, were the more attentive in hearing, and the more careful to remember what they heard; whereas when the master of the family repeats all himself, children and servants are usually heedless in hearing, and mindless both in public and private of what they hear. After repetition he sung a Psalm and concluded with prayer. Then he went to his former patron's house MR. ROBERT SWINNOCK to supper. By that time he had supped, there would be an hundred or more gathered together to MR. SWINNOCK's house, to join with him in the conclusion of the day.

Many times to my comfort, I have seen two rooms, one considerable for largeness, full of persons of all ranks, met to worship the great God. After supper he came among them, begun with a short prayer, then would read the verses he had expounded in that day, ask what observations were raised from such a verse, then proceed to the next, so through all the verses he had expounded forenoon and afternoon, then inquire what the texts were, the doctrines, explications, reasons, and uses, all in order as preached. He seldom named one head himself, but still heartened them to speak, and assisted them when they were at a loss; then they sung a Psalm, and he ended with prayer about ten at night.

Once a month he administered the LORD's Supper to a considerable number of serious Christians, with that life and warmth in prayer and opening Scripture, that some of his communicants have thought themselves in the suburbs of heaven, when they joined with him in that ordinance. Thus he sanctified the LORD's-day, spending nine or ten hours in public and private worship, beside what time he spent in secret duties, in which he was never niggardly; so that the Sabbath, which was a day of rest to others, was a day of great pains and labour to him, yet it was easy, yea, delightful to him; and at the end of the day, when those

who took not half his pains, have complained of their weariness, he would be exceeding lively and cheerful; such was his great love to his Saviour, and the souls committed to his charge. The Sabbath day to him was a day of light and gladness, and a good day.

CHAPTER V.

*The great Pains he took with his people on the Week-days :
His Diligence on all occasions to do Good, and his Carriage in his Family.*

YET he did not think it sufficient to teach his people on the LORD'S-day, but the town being very populous, and the parish large, and he rendered thereby incapable of going from house to house, on the week-days he laid out himself in the service of the LORD, for the benefit of his parish. Every Thursday, their market-day, he preached a lecture, to which many Ministers came, and with much delight sat under him. On Fridays he met in private with as many of his people as would come together, when sometimes he expounded the Scripture, sometimes preached, and always sung and prayed with them. And also on Mondays or Thursdays, he appointed a conference, where the question being before propounded and known, (for instance, what was the nature of repentance or faith, or what the sign, means or motives to it?,) his people prepared to speak to it, and he by his wise courteous carriage won their hearts, and drew them to study the Scriptures and good books, that they might be able to speak to the purpose. After they had spoken, he would gather together their scattered notions, bring them into an orderly method, apply to them suitable texts of Scripture, add what he thought necessary, and so rendered the meeting exceeding profitable and comfortable to his flock. I have heard him at one of these meetings, when the question was about one of the petitions of the

LORD'S Prayer, to my great advantage and delight; for Christian communion, managed with prudence, is that which keeps our religion in breath, and without which it would be ready to die. .

When he laid down this way of conference, instead thereof he set up catechising on the week-days in public, and this was continued till he had gone through the whole town, except some families in the out-bounds, which he intended also to have catechised, but was prevented.

He was of a noble disposition, very free to communicate knowledge to others, not like a whirlpool that sucks all to itself, but like a fountain to disperse its streams for the refreshment of many. Seldom were any in his company, but they might receive good by him. He was sensible he could never labour enough for his LORD, and that God makes no difference between an idle and an evil servant. Hence it was that when he was often advised of his friends to be mindful of his body, and not to work it so hard, he was deaf to all those advices, and ready to say with CALVIN, (when counselled by his friends to take care of his health,) 'Would you have my LORD when he comes, to find me idle?'

ST. AUSTIN'S wish was, that CHRIST when he came to call him by death, might find him either praying or preaching. Such seemed to be the desire of MR. WILSON, by his indefatigable laboriousness about his Master's business. I never knew him given to any recreation, but exceeding provident he was of his time. A little after dinner he would sometimes sit and discourse, but usually if he was at home, his study was his place of abode. He was *helluo librorum* an indefatigable Student, stealing time from his sleep for his book. It is said of BRADFORD that he slept not above four hours in the night, and that his book went not out of his hand till sleep came, and that LATIMER rose Winter and Summer at two in the morning; and of another Martyr that he was spare of meat, sparer of sleep, but sparest of time.

If he were invited to a feast, he was so zealous for GOD

that he commonly after dinner called for a Bible, sung a Psalm, expounded some verse of Scripture, and prayed with his friends. MR. FENNER, of Essex, that eminent servant of CHRIST, meeting him once at MR. BUTCHER'S, was so extremely taken with his active cheerful spirit for God and godliness, that he said to MR. BUTCHER, 'I am ashamed of myself, to see how MR. WILSON gallopeth towards Heaven, and I do but creep on at a snail's pace.'

Though he was a good linguist, well read in modern and ancient authors, yet ordinarily he preached in a plain clear style, that he might be understood by the meanest capacity. His constant preaching discovered him an able workman; his doctrines were always clear from his text, his heads pertinent to his subject, and he had a rare faculty in applying suitable Scriptures: (which is the principal way of convincing the judgment; for it is the authority of God that must do the work.)

He was so much valued for his abilities, that there was scarcely any public occasion of sermons in the county, but he was chosen to preach them. Sometimes he preached before the Judges at the Assizes, and twice before the Parliament.

But he was not of the number of them, who are zealous abroad, that they may be well spoken of, but careless at home what becomes of their families; but, as DAVID, "he walked in his house with a perfect heart," and brought up his children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. CICERO saith of QUINTUS MAXIMUS, 'That he was not good only in the sight of the people, but he was better out of their sight.' Truly he was as good within as without doors. Each morning and evening he read some part of Scripture, expounded it, sung a Psalm, and prayed with his family. He would often ask his children questions about the principles of religion, examine them about his sermons on the LORD'S-day, and cause them to learn the Scripture without book.

He prayed often with his wife apart, and spent much time in secret prayer.

He was very watchful to set a good example before his children and servants, knowing that such are led more by the eye than the ear, and more observant of what their superiors do than what they say; and, indeed, his whole conversation was a living exposition upon the Gospel, that what he taught on the LORD'S-day in his doctrine, he preached over all the week in his life. O how unlike was he to those Ministers, whose lives give the lie to their doctrines! He was exemplary in his converse with all men, and spake much by his carriage, even when he spake not a word. His good works were invincible demonstrations to convince his neighbours whereby he stole their hearts, and won their affections after the beauty of holiness.



CHAPTER VI.

The Reformation which was wrought by his means in Maidstone. His Courage, Zeal, Faith, and Humility.

MAIDSTONE was formerly a very profane town, but by his preaching he prevailed with them, that though the town was large and full of people, yet you should hardly see one person in the street after the sermons on the LORD'S-day. And I have known when the Mayor hath searched the inns and ale-houses, he hath scarce found one of the town there. One of the Judges, at an Assize, was pleased to say, that in all his circuit he never came to a town where the LORD'S-day was so strictly observed. I scarce ever knew any man so strict as MR. WILSON in the sanctification of the LORD'S-day. He so much wrought upon the people there, that, in the house where I lived, all pot-herbs were gathered and made ready on the Saturday night, and whatsoever was for their dinners put into readiness for the fire on the day before. He was much of the mind of the primitive Christian, who, being asked *'Servasti Dominicam?'* answered, *'Christianus sum, omittere non possum.'* The

sanctification of that day is exceeding useful to keep up the power of godliness in our hearts and lives. And as God on that day bestoweth great blessings on them that humbly and reverently worship him thereon, so he hath inflicted dreadful judgments on the profaners of that day ; and when men have neglected to punish them, he hath taken the sword into his own hand, and done it himself. One example whereof there was in Maidstone when I lived there : One Sabbath, as children were playing near a wall, against which wagon wheels were set up, on a sudden there arose a great wind, which blew down a wheel upon one of the children, and crushed it to death.

And such was the blessing of God upon his preaching and example, that many families, morning and evening, set up religious duties who never minded them before. You might there, if you walked in the great street about nine or ten o'clock in a morning, hear singing in many families, for they commonly sung morning and evening, when they read the Word and prayed.

He had an undaunted spirit, not discouraged by any obstacles. He feared God and none else. He was like that Ancient, that when a threatening message of death was sent him, bid the messenger tell the Empress, 'I fear nothing but sin.'

He discovered much courage in reprovng sin ; for as CHRIST said of the Church of Ephesus, "He could not bear those that were evil," were they never so great. ELIJAH durst speak to AHAB, and MR. WILSON to the highest person, by way of reprehension, when there was cause for it. If men were bold in sinning, he was as bold in telling them of it, and giving their sins their due accents ; yet, as a wise physician, he could distinguish between pimples and plague-sores, between infirmities and scandals, and accordingly apply himself to his patients.

He abundantly discovered his zeal for God in embracing all opportunities to do him service. Some who it is hoped had the root of the matter in them, separated from him, though they themselves acknowledged that he was their

spiritual father, and “had begotten them through the Gospel.” This causeless separation lay near his heart even when he lay upon his dying-bed. The great danger of their souls, as also of those that wholly cast off the care of their eternal good, caused him in the course of sermons and expositions to reprove their sins sharply, and indeed according to the command of the HOLY GHOST, *απολομως*, “cutting, that they might be sound in the faith.” (*Titus* i. 13.) Some of those that separated, were very dear to him, that he might say as DAVID, “It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it willingly. Was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me? But it was my friend and my acquaintance, we took sweet counsel together, and (formerly) walked to the house of God in company.” (*Psalms* lv. 12, 13, 14.) But the truths of the Gospel were much dearer; and he was a man of such clear convincing light, and, as it is said of APOLLOS, (*Acts* xviii. 24,) *δυνατος ων εν ταις γραφαις*, *able, strong, mighty in the Scriptures*, that had they not been willingly blind, they must have seen their errors. It is observed by some as a special providence of God, that the same day in which PELAGIUS the heretic was born in Britain, ST. AUGUSTINE, the great confuter of his heresy, was born in Africa; God so disposing it, that the poison and the antidote should come into the world together. I am sure it was a good providence to Maidstone, that when many errors sprung up, there was such an able faithful husbandman to watch them and root them out, otherwise many more than did, might have fallen from their own steadfastness.

He was not only sound, but also strong in the faith; and in the greatest dangers and difficulties could rely on God, and trust Him with himself and all he had. He met with much opposition in the work of the Ministry from all sorts of persons, both from open enemies and seeming friends; but he was undaunted in the midst of all, “not moved by any of those things, neither counted he his life dear unto him, so he might finish his course with joy, and the Ministry which he received of the LORD JESUS.” He minded

his own work, consulted his duty, and left God's work (the issues and events thereof) to God.

He knew God could and would take care of his own cause, whatever became of him and other instruments.

He lived much above the world. His mind was fitted to his estate, and notwithstanding he had many opportunities for getting riches, if he had sought them, yet he never made use of them for that purpose. I have often admired his indifferency of spirit to the things of this life. O how far was he from many in our days who trouble themselves with ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and worldly concerns, all the week, and on the Lord's-day set their people off with raw confused discourses! A little before the Insurrection in Kent, in the year 1648, one hundred pounds was brought into MR. WILSON's house, (being a legacy given his eldest daughter, by MR. JOHN BIGGE, one of the Jurats of Maidstone, and I believe the greatest portion any of his children had,) which money in the time of the Insurrection was by the soldiers discovered and taken away, (though quickly restored again,) MR. WILSON being then at London. When the country was quiet, and MR. WILSON returned to his dwelling, I asked him whether he was not much troubled, when he heard his money was gone; he answered me, 'I was no more troubled when I heard the money was carried out of my house, than I was when I heard it was brought in.' I also then inquired of him what frame of spirit he was in, when he went from Maidstone: For the town and country being in arms, many of the mean profane wretches reproached him; when he was going out of the town, they took his horse by the bridle, and twice or thrice brought him back, crying out, 'WILSON, WILSON, Where is your God now? Where is your God now?' He told me, Truly I thought (when they blasphemously said unto me, 'Where is your God?') on the text, "My God is in heaven, and hath done whatsoever He pleased." (*Psalm cxv. 3.*)

And great were his gifts as well as his graces. God was pleased to bestow on him large natural endowments,

whereby he became much the more capable of doing good. He had a quick apprehension, a clear understanding, a deep and sound judgment, and a tenacious memory. He was none of those Preachers, whose tongues are galloping, whilst sober reason and convincing sense stand still, or at best doth but creep. He discovered strong judgment in a few words. His body was of a strong constitution, and truly so was his soul. He would presently find out the meaning of hard authors, and what he read was his own; I never knew any of the same strength of memory. Though he was careful to write down his sermons, yet I never saw him use any notes, and he made a good use of his memory. He had scarce his equal for his remembrance in the Scripture; he was tried a long time together. One took a Bible, and read a verse in one chapter, another verse in another, went forward and backward, both as to the books and chapters, and verses of the Scripture, and all along he told the reader the verse, chapter, and book, without any mistake. And himself told me that he believed, he could tell the book, chapter, and verse, which any should read to him all the day long. Much appeared in his prayers; I have heard him of a Fast-day pray an hour together, and most of the time in Scripture phrases. The word was dear to him, his daily delight and meditation.

That which made all his parts useful and amiable, was that as DAVID consecrated the spoils taken from the Gentiles to the temple, so he dedicated his natural accomplishments to his God, and made them serviceable for the advancement of his honour.

But for all his great natural and gracious accomplishments he was clothed with humility: None thought so low of him, as he of himself. His face like MOSES's shined, that all his judicious friends observed it, and admired it; but he knew it not. He had not the least show of ostentation in his carriage or language.

CHAPTER VII.

His Wives, Children, and Death.

WHEN he was about twenty-six years of age, he married a daughter of SIR ——— ZINZANS, who, being in a consumption before she married him, died within seven or eight months after.

About a year after her death, he married MRS. DAMARIS CABLE, (daughter of MR. JAMES CABLE, of London, Merchant,) who was a meet help to him in his civil and spiritual concerns; by her he had eleven children, one whereof, namely, his eldest son SAMUEL, died young, the other ten he left at his death. He had little of this world to leave his many children; (about one hundred pounds a piece, as I have heard, after their mother's death;) but he left them much, if we consider the many fervent prayers, which night and day he poured out before the LORD on their behalf. I have read of one that when she came to die told her children: 'I have little to leave you, but this I must tell you, there is not one room in the house, which is not perfumed with prayer for you.' Often did good MR. WILSON cry out to GOD, 'O that my children might live in thy sight: LORD, come down by thy SPIRIT into their hearts, lest my children die, lest they die eternally!'

That piety which shone so brightly in his life, did wonderfully sparkle in his death. The messenger which GOD sent to call him hence, was a violent fever, which he welcomed, as knowing it was sent by a gracious FATHER to call him home. No guest comes at any time amiss to him that keeps a constant table; no Providence, no not death itself, comes at any time amiss to him that is always ready, and dieth daily. His lamps were burning, his oil was ready in his vessel, when the Bridegroom came.

His fever had continued but a little while, before his friends did prognosticate, that it would remove him from

thence, whom they loved as their own souls, and under whose Ministry they had sat with so much delight. But what he had been in the course of his life, the same did he continue to his death ; though his disease was violent, and his fits often acute, yet he never complained ; his pain might cause him to mourn, but it did not make him murmur ; he revered the rod in the hand of his FATHER, and that cup which his FATHER gave him to drink he submitted to. In his extremity, his faith and patience eminently shone forth to the honour of God, and comfort of those that visited him.

Being sensible of his approaching death, he was exceeding solicitous for the town and parish whereof he was Minister. As MOSES, before he died, was careful to appoint a successor, that might lead GOD's people into the earthly Canaan : So MR. WILSON before he died took care for a successor, that might further that good work which he had begun through grace, in many of them, and be helpful to conduct them to their heavenly Canaan. To this end, he called some of the town to him, and advised them to consider of some able Minister to succeed him, and he commended MR. JOHN CRUMP to them, as the fittest that he knew. Afterwards MR. CRUMP did succeed him, not only in his place but also in his faithfulness, diligence, and serviceableness.

As JACOB before his death called his children together, to direct and advise them, so he called his wife and children to him ; desiring his wife not to be discouraged at his death ; or to sorrow as they that have no hope, but to continue to serve GOD in CHRIST, and trust God, and to be cheerful in him, adding this to her comfort, ' Though now we are parted for a time, yet there is a time coming that we shall be joined again, never to part more.' His children were most of them little ; but those that were capable, he exhorted to fear God betimes ; and directing his speech to his eldest daughter, he said, ' Look to it that you meet me not at the day of judgment in an unregenerate estate.'

He commended all his children to the LORD, in much faith in the covenant, which GOD had made to him and his.

When his Christian friends came to visit him, he always laboured to requite their kindness by godly counsel and exhortations: He wished them to be fervent in reading the Scriptures, to prize highly and meditate much on the promises, to be holy and blameless in their conversation, to stick close to ordinances, and to hold on in communion with the people of GOD in the town. When EPICETUS broke his leg, (it is reported of him,) he discoursed as if his soul had been in another man's body. And when the bones of MR. WILSON were sore vexed with the violence of his disease, he discoursed in such a composed heavenly manner, as if he had ailed nothing.

When one or two of those who had separated from communion with him, came to see him, he did with much affection bewail their schism, prayed that GOD would bring them back again, and told them that 'he could willingly lay down his life, so they might join in communion with the other godly people in the town.'

As JACOB when he was dying "worshipped, leaning on his staff:" (*Heb. xi. 21*;) So he on his dying bed was frequent in praying to and praising his GOD. It was but two nights before his death, though he was very sick, yet he made his bed his pulpit, out of which he preached to some that came to see him, concerning the preciousness of the promises, and concerning the preciousness of CHRIST to believers. And O, with what affectionate expressions did this Minister and member of CHRIST commend his Head, the Pearl of great price, and the promises He had purchased; saying to his visitors, that one promise was more precious than a world.

MR. WILSON's apprehension that death drew near, was very comfortable to him. A gentlewoman of his Society coming to take her leave of him, (being to remove out of town,) he pleasantly said to her, 'What will you say, good MRS. CRISP, if I get the start of you, and get to Heaven.'

before you get to Dover?' When another came to see him, he asked her what she thought of him, who answering, 'Truly, Sir, I think you are not far from your Father's house,' he replied, 'O that is good news indeed!' When others spake to him of his death in a mournful way, he said to them, 'I bless God who hath suffered me to live so long, to do him some service; and now after I have done the work appointed me, is pleased to call me away so soon.' Thus in the breathings of his faith and hope, he departed this life, and commended his spirit into the hands of Him that redeemed it, and that on the Lord's-day; that day on which he was wont to work so hard, was the day of his entrance into eternal rest.

He needed no picture or monuments to preserve his memory. His good works (though transient in themselves, are yet permanent in the hearts of many, and) praise him in the gates.

He was, when he died, about fifty-two years of age, of a strong constitution, and might, in a course of nature, (if God had so pleased,) have lived much longer. But he brought forth fruit early, and was ripe when others of his age began but to blossom, and therefore no wonder that he was gathered by God so soon. He was in his meridian when others were but just peeping above the horizon, and so might well set before them. It was much desired and prayed, that his life might have been lengthened; but his time was come, he had "fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith," and his Master called him to receive his crown.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. JAMES FRASER:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I.

*Touching some Things that happened to me from my
Birth, till I was Seventeen Years old.*

1. I WAS born in the North of Scotland, in 1639, July 29th, and was not like to live, but the LORD healed me; for the evil humours broke out in boils great and numerous. My disposition was sullen, and I loved not to wear gaudy clothes; nor had I any wise tales like other children, so that I gave no occasion to my parents to repeat them, as parents usually do with fondness.

2. Yet the LORD was doing me good all the while. I overpass common mercies, and mention one that was remarkable. My mother being obliged to come South, to be out of the way of a cruel enemy, lived with a relation in a borough-town on the coast-side: I was very unruly, and therefore kept under some awe and restraint from wandering abroad when I pleased; but this increased my desire to ramble the more. At a time I slipped out, unknown to any, to a garden where was a deep well; when once I got out of doors, I ran as hard as ever I could; and, not taking heed where I went, I fell in a by-path which carried me directly to the well before spoken of, open above and over-

grown with grass, which hid the water from me ; so that before I knew I fell over head in the well, the water being very deep, only my hands laid hold on the grass that did grow on the sides of the well. Here I continued for a good space, and should no doubt have drowned, if God had not sent some to my relief ; for he that was appointed to wait on me not knowing whither I went, the mere Providence of God led him out to seek me in the garden ; when, coming to the further end of it, and despairing to find me, he went back with intention to seek me in the town, which if he had done, I had perished for ever : But the LORD directing him in his coming back to the well, he cast his eyes and perceived a hand lying on the grass, and looking more narrowly, found it was I ; and so, with much ado, pulled me out of the water, even ready to expire, and unable to help myself : And after the water was poured out of my mouth, and I had slept a while, I was as well as ever, through the wonderful goodness of God. O that I may walk worthy of this kindness, and that I may be preserved to do Him service ! This happened to me during my first appearance in the world.

3. Before I was converted to God in CHRIST, I advanced four steps ; and in every one of them I had undoubtedly rested, and so, missing of CHRIST, I had undoubtedly perished, if I had not been beaten out of them : But the LORD seeing me ready to rest in these, made them all to break under me, until at last he revealed his Son JESUS to my soul.

The first step was the getting some prayers by heart, and saying them in a formal way, morning and evening ; so that now I was complete as I thought : The LORD likewise then was drawing my heart to what was good ; for when I said my prayers, morning and evening, and did not slight them, I had much peace and comfort of heart ; and, when I omitted them, I was vexed in my conscience. Sometimes for a while together I would omit seeking God through sloth, and then would I be terrified with fearful dreams, the voice of which I thought was a rebuke for omitting my

prayers ; and for a while after I would be very zealous ; and when I did any kind of duty, I would not be troubled at all ; and what evil soever came upon me, I judged it to be for the omission of my duties, which I looked upon as my greatest sin. By these means, as the most fit for me then, did the LORD seek to cause me to follow good, and to eschew evil.

But this continued not long, for I was soon beaten from this resting-place. The means and occasions were, (1.) These who should have overseen me grew careless ; they let me alone, and took no account of me at all, but entrusted me to others : And therefore, having no King, I did what was right in my own eyes. (2.) The LORD, after he had several times drawn me to the yoke by fearful dreams and some small convictions, finding that the impressions of these things wore off me, that I slipped out of the collar again, and not intending that this should be my rest, did not trouble me ; and I not having changes, but being let alone, let God and duty alone. (*Psalm* lv. 19.) (3.) Because my soul was not united to CHRIST the Fountain, hence any thing I had vanished and perished. (*John* xv. 4.) (4.) Several lusts not being destroyed, notwithstanding all my duties, did in the end choke any good that was sown. (5.) Evil company did me much harm ; and through continual converse with them, I was transformed into their image. Through these means mainly it was that I fell from this state, so that I neglected duty altogether, and at last did so without a challenge, and gave but too much way to other sins, until God used new means, and made another assault, which he did shortly thereafter, thus :—

The second step was the zealous performance of some duties, especially prayer. I know not how, and wonder still at it, that, having so little knowledge, I could be able to conceive a prayer, and continue therein for some reasonable time, and not only so, but to delight in it likewise, and that in a greater measure than I did formerly. The occasion was this : My father was sick and like to die, and

then sent for me, having provided a Chaplain to the house, who was to have the oversight of me likewise ; he was a godly, tender-hearted man, but none of the deepest reach : And his zeal appeared still the more, in that there was nothing among ourselves but either ignorance, profaneness, or formality ; while he seemed to follow the power of godliness, for which he was generally hated and despised. He was a great enemy to vice, such as drunkenness, sabbath-breaking and swearing ; and being continued our Chaplain after my father's death, (for about that time he died,) he set himself to spread the sincere knowledge of God, and to do good to others ; and, for this cause, instructed, reproved, and set them upon the practice of duties. I coming home, was delivered over to him, and to his oversight ; which was a great grief to me, not relishing his strictness. The first night I would have gone to bed without prayers ; but, as I was putting off my clothes, he marked my design, and commanded I should fall down on my knees and recommend myself to God before I went to bed, which I obeyed, and said over my evening prayer I had before got by heart, he reading his book in the mean time.

When I was in my bed, the consideration of my new yoke made me weep bitterly. The man was lean and hard-favoured, and kept at a great distance from me ; and I was secretly fearing the imposition of greater burdens upon me.

One day, as we were talking more familiarly than ordinarily we were wont, he desired to hear my prayers. I thereupon repeated both morning and evening prayers I had learned formerly : To which he giving attention, and knowing both by the matter and my way of repeating them, that they were a lesson which I had learned from others, he told me, that, unless I had got the SPIRIT of God to teach me to pray, I could not go to heaven ; and that all other prayers proved ineffectual : And, thereupon, a while after, he pressed us that were children to express the pure and real conceivings of our own hearts, though we should but utter five sentences at a time, and that this coming from the heart was more acceptable to God, than many

and long prayers taught us by others.. He likewise taught us the principles of religion, the meaning of the Belief, the LORD's Prayer, and Ten Commands; and had a very strict eye over us, correcting us soundly for cursing, swearing, lying, and Sabbath-breaking; and observed our ways narrowly, and took a strict account of us both as to what we learned and of our practices, but especially of me; so that in a short time, through the LORD's blessing, I attained to some competent measure of knowledge, and left my former ways, and set about secret and public duties, being about eleven years old at this time; and use made duties easy; and the peace I had in them, with the hopes of a reward, made me delight in them, so in a short time I went about them no longer by constraint, but of mine own accord, and willingly, and sometimes would exceed what was enjoined me. Every day, morning and evening, I would bow my knee, and read some portion of Scripture, and pray at some length and with some earnestness, but had no spiritual exercise, and no communication with God. I likewise began to comply with my pedagogue better, and to love him better; and he seeing me profit both in letters and godliness, was more kind to me: Nor could he be said, for all his strictness, to be rigid to me, insomuch that for the space of a whole year, I remember not that I was twice whipped; and one time was for swearing and playing at cards. During the time which he was with me, being a year and a half, I learned the most of my Grammar; but this not being my rest, I fell grievously away from all this profession and practice.

2. The steps of this decay were, (1.) Wantonness and lightness in time of public prayers, through a foolish light humour, and the temptations of others; for I studied not heart-reformation. (2.) More slight performance of duties when I durst not omit them. And (3.) I would sometimes omit them altogether, when out of the knowledge of my governor. (4.) When I began to play on the Sabbath-day with others, for which I got a memorandum: For one day, being the LORD's-day, the children and I were playing

some childish rogueries, which our governor (good man) hearing, calls us up, and then very seriously endeavours to persuade us and convince us of the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and the danger thereof, and gave us a large exhortation, and then enjoined us all to go to our knees, and confess our sins to God, and seek pardon thereof, which we obeyed; and, for my part, though at first I was constrained to it, yet I was serious both in acknowledging of guilt, and seeking a pardon of sin: And, when we had done, we were dismissed, being first exhorted not to do the like again; which produced a reformation in us all for some time. (5.) Through mine own evil nature, which was not then mortified, and the counsel of others that were my companions, I despised my governor, and did join with others in afflicting him, by approbation and desire, though I durst not do it so openly. (6.) I proceeded from this to a more open violation of the Sabbath, and played with the servants on the Lord's-day, from six o'clock till nine, my tutor, in the mean time, I know not how, either remitting in his zeal, or hoping, when we were more settled in our affairs, (for we were to go South on the next day,) to rectify things. (7.) When I came South, my pedagogue became more rigid to me, and whipped me more frequently, I confess deservedly; and I turned to hate him, and became stubborn, and would do nothing for him. My father being dead, I was but too much countenanced by those with whom I was, who would not suffer him to take such a course with me as I merited; so that things came this length, that I openly reviled him, and avowedly omitted duty. At last he was put away. (8.) He once being put away, I became worse, and did no good at all: I neglected duty sometimes for many days together. (9.) I was much given to lying, and made an extraordinary practice of it, so that I could scarce speak a true word. (10.) I turned to mock godliness sometimes, though this did not proceed so much from a habit and inclination, as from the temptations of others, whom, by this means, I studied to please. (11.) My conscience at last became seared and insensible.

so that I did all this with little or no remorse. (12.) I stole from my mother's waiting-man five shillings sterling while I lay with him; and being suspected for it, I was denying it, but it was proved against me, and I was with shame made to restore it. (13.) I became so wicked, as not content to omit prayer on the Sabbath-day, and to talk idly as others did; I played the whole day at dice, contrary to my light, and my conscience even in the mean time accusing and condemning me. In a word, I was clean gone, and nothing all this time was dealing with me, save only some ineffectual checks upon my heart now and then.

3. This decay did proceed from the same causes with the former; yet I remarked these five things to have had most influence on me: (1.) I prayed, but endeavoured not to take away my sins; my prayers never killed my sins, and therefore my sins killed prayer: Like many now, that profess, and yet sin on still; that fear the LORD, and serve their idols. (2.) My governor decayed in his zeal, through want of good company, and through neglect of private prayer, in which I marked him deficient, and through too much familiarity with the domestics that did blunt his zeal; and I think, seeing my wickedness grow upon him and over-master him, he despaired of doing me good. (3.) Because, when he was gone, none took care of me; and "I did what was good in mine own eyes." None did reprove or correct me for my faults, nor did look on my soul at all, or urge me on to duty, but gave me loose reins; and old JEHOIADA being dead or gone, "I did evil in the sight of the LORD." (4.) Because not followed with terrors and convictions, peace and ease did me hurt. (5.) I found evil company did me much harm: I learned their ways; they hardened and encouraged me in an ill course, and drew me from the LORD.

4. Yet, notwithstanding, I was not altogether left of God; now and then the SPIRIT of GOD would strive and draw me contrary to my inclinations, now and then I would pray and read, and be affected: And this proceeded from these causes; (1.) Some extraordinary sharp convic-

tions from the LORD on my conscience, that would put me out to prayer and to get peace ; which storm being over, I cared not for prayer any more.—(2.) Outward and grievous afflictions at school, by reason of the tyrannical rigidity of a school-master, who delighted in the scourging of children, and would often-times pick quarrels with me, and scourge me for little or no fault : And this in the anguish of my soul would cause me to pour out a prayer. (3.) Sometimes our teachers would instruct us to pray ; and then an exhortation had some influence on me. I lingered on in this condition three or four years, until I went South again, in order to my going to the College.

The third step. 1. I was then going about the form of all manner of duties both public and private, joined likewise with reformation and zeal. Before I was only taken up in prayer, but now I made conscience of all duties ; and therefore meditated, read the Scriptures frequently, kept the Sabbath very strictly, and read good books : I left all my old sins and ways, such as lying, swearing, and made conscience of all moral virtues ; I left my gaming, my idle talk, and became very temperate ; and, if I at any time failed, I would fall down on my knees, and beg the LORD's mercy. Yea, so zealous was I, that I endeavoured to gain others, and would reprove them for their looseness : And this produced in me some love to the godly, so that I seemed both to myself and others, a new man ; and yet I was a stranger to CHRIST, and lying fast bound in a natural condition.

The occasion of this reformation was this ; one Sabbath-day, being then fifteen years of age, I read a book called the *Practice of Piety*, concerning the misery of a natural man, the torments of hell, and the blessedness of a godly man, and some directions for godly life : My heart was therewith so affected, that without more ado I resolved to become a new man, and to live not only a harmless life, but a devout life, to turn my back upon all my old ways, and utterly to forsake them. And in this way I had marvellous sweetness and peace, esteeming myself really con-

verted; and would ordinarily in my prayers thank the LORD for giving me his good SPIRIT; and thought with myself, if I continued in this condition to the end, I should undoubtedly be saved. In a word, I was a complete Pharisee; for the benefit of others I will describe the frame of my spirit under this dispensation.

2. I had the very characters of a Pharisee: For, (1.) I looked only to the outward letter of the Law, and endeavoured an outward conformity thereto. (2.) I judged myself rather by the length and multitude of my duties, than by any other thing in them. (3.) I rested in duties as the end, and made them not the means to bring me to CHRIST: When I did seek or pray for any spiritual mercy, it was not the things I sought I was mostly taken up with: Which did evidence itself to me in this, that when I prayed for any mercy, when I got it not, nor any promise of it, yet was I satisfied. (5.) Whenever I sinned, I satisfied GOD and my own conscience by doubling my duties, and gave them to the LORD as satisfaction: And then, as though the blood of CHRIST had been applied, there ensued peace. (5.) Hence my duties never put away my sins, but I served the LORD and my idols; and if there was any reformation, it was but the outside of the platter that was cleansed: But I neither saw, nor did hate, nor strive against, nor overcome any heart-corruptions. (6.) I was utterly ignorant of the mystery of the Gospel; I neither knew nor studied Faith, nor the Promises, nor Justification by imputed Righteousness. (7.) I was more troubled for the want of Holiness and the neglect of Duties than for the want of CHRIST, and loved CHRIST's benefits better than CHRIST himself. (8.) I hated profane persons, and loved civil men that had any form of religion; but did not relish the most strict, especially such who expressed the power of Godliness. (*John* xv. 8.) (9.) Heaven was not sweet to me, but I ever thought on it with grief and aversion, in respect of the constant uninterrupted spiritual exercises they had there, and the want of carnal comforts. (10.) My conscience, notwithstanding, was unsatisfied, and there

was a worm gnawing at the root of all this ; I could not be quit of this assault, that for all this I should probably go to hell. I had no great security from all my duties, and my fears were still alive ; and I found, the more I did, they increased, (*Matt. xix. 16.*) the young man cried still out, “ What shall I do to inherit eternal life ? ” (11.) Whatever I did was rather to satisfy conscience, than from love to God, who was a terror to me, and whom I could not otherwise represent to myself than as an angry Judge and enemy, whom I was troubled to satisfy.

3. I decayed from this and fell, and was beaten off it through these means ; (1.) My pleasures, vanities and evil company, to which I was not mortified, did draw my heart away. (2.) Sins did break out, such as cursing, swearing and carding, and that frequently ; so as I could not get comfort in duties. And this produced a despair in me of the works of my hands ; my duties were not able to bear up the weight of my sins : And therefore, sighing, I went backward ; and seeing there was no hope, and loving idols, I said I would follow them. (*Jer. ii. 28. Lam. i. 9.*) (3.) Duties, through process of time, began to be a burden to me, especially when they gave me not full satisfaction nor peace : I was wearied in the greatness of my way, and with labouring in the smoke, and found no end in the travail of my soul, and therefore gave over ; for this thought remained secretly in my heart, That I should go to hell when all was done. (4.) By a certain Providence I was brought to see the vanity of all this, which made me seek to another mountain for rest ; and, finding none, I turned a Seeker, though not in judgment, yet really and truly in practice ; which made me despair not only of being happy in the works of the Law which I had done, but even by these which I was to do.

The fourth step was, Being out of all forms, I turned a Seeker, had no principle, but lived in hopes that God would reveal himself to me : Sometimes I prayed ; I had some comfort in doing duties with any affection and life, which sometimes I would attain unto. The occasion was

this; I was before this a formalist; duties were my CHRIST, which I began (through my prevailing lusts and outward temptations, and withal some secret suspicions of their influence to justify me) gradually to be remiss in: Yet I left not the principle, (notwithstanding I fell short in my practice,) That if I could abstain from my ordinary sins, keep the Sabbath-day, pray morning and evening, and do every known duty, I should be saved. And this continued until, being left by my mother in a religious family, I by Providence took up a book called the *Seventeen false Rests*; wherein I found the vanity of formality in duties discovered very plainly, and some other lengths I had not attained to. I was afterwards confirmed in this by reading the Confession of Faith, where it saith, ‘That though one should form his life never so exactly, according to nature and morality, without CHRIST he could not be saved.’

This was enough; and the SPIRIT seconding it, convinced me I was quite wrong first, and had never known what true grace was; and besides, despaired ever of myself to come to that estate of grace: All my refuges of lies were shaken, and that which many sermons for a long time could not do, now in a moment three lines did.

2. The frame of my spirit might be thus described; (1.) I thought all my duties, and all I could do, insufficient to save me, though as yet I saw not so clearly the insufficiency of duties; and therefore did easily conclude, that all this time I was in an unconverted condition, and, if I died without a further change than yet I felt, I should undoubtedly be damned. (2.) I thought there was a certain state and blessed condition to which all the converted, and such as had the LORD’S SPIRIT, had come, betwixt me and which there was a very great cloud; and that I was, as it were, locked up from this. (3.) I had some hopes that God might do me good, and bring me to this state before I died. (4.) I had in the mean time some sharp and terrible convictions for particular sins, but not for my evil nature, and which wore away without any remaining effect. (5.) I had no principle, nor rested in any thing, but looked

for some Divine manifestation and extraordinary revelation to my soul. (6.) I prayed sometimes when the SPIRIT moved, and sometimes not; yet had no peace except when I prayed with life and affections; and then, though I rested not in this, yet would it comfort me. (7.) I thought that those that were regenerate lived a life of perpetual comfort and glory, and always performed duties with life; and, when I arrived at this pitch, I should judge myself converted. And I further thought there was a marvellous way of attaining to this, I looked for the kingdom of heaven to come with observation. (8.) I ordinarily slighted duties, and fell into swearing, lying, and idle talking and carding; pleasures were my idol to which I was not mortified; I had no principle nor centre. (9.) I mourned for sin, not because it offended God, but because of the consequents of it; I was not sincere: And I thought, if once I could hate sin because it offended God, that then I was sincere. I went on thus for the space of three years, settled in nothing, but in a waiting and seeking condition.

3. During this time I met with some wonderful Providences, wherein much of the power and goodness of God did visibly appear.

They were these: (1.) A year and a half after I had blasphemed, being in my bed, the thoughts of that grievous sin came to my mind, and that with such horror as made me tremble with an unaccustomed fear. I essayed to pray, but could not get my mouth opened; a number of blasphemies and cursings ran in my mind with great horror and against my will, which I thought was like the Devil in me. I had not knowledge, and therefore was the more troubled; for I was not fourteen years of age then. The more these thoughts ran in my mind, my horror was increased, inso-much, that at last it became intolerable; and then, in my extremity and in great anguish of spirit, the LORD pitied me, and opened my mouth to pray for help, which I did most affectionately, and with great liberty and abundance of tears, which did by a secret virtue calm my confused soul; for now did I conceive that I was not quite forsaken

of God, and slept till the next day : But my troubles began the next day again. I then read in godly books ; and casting a book up at random, the first passage that I met with was this, ‘ When SATAN casts in blasphemous thoughts in thy heart, be not discouraged ; for they are not thine, but SATAN’S.’ Here was a well of water ; though my eyes at first could not see it so full, yet it did somewhat help me, and by it now I perceived much of God’s condescending nature : In process of time, when I began to be less troubled, these blasphemous thoughts wore away, and so did my trouble likewise.

A second merciful Providence was this : In the time I was a Seeker, and heard them speaking of the sin against the HOLY GHOST, and that it was unpardonable, I began presently to have some weak suspicions that I had sinned that sin, but concluded nothing certainly, because I knew not what the sin might be : And all this time it was my exercise to inquire of such as had knowledge, what that sin against the HOLY GHOST might be : At last I took up a Concordance to seek the LORD’S mind in his word, and looked for the word *Sin* ; I read, “ If we sin wilfully,” &c. (*Heb. x. 26.*) I thought I was stricken therewith as with thunder, and continued amazed and speechless for a while ; for I thought it was clear and past doubt I should go to hell, seeing I had sinned against knowledge, and wilfully : So that, for the space of three days, this temptation was a very sad exercise to me. Now, said my heart to me, dost thou not at last see thy doom clearly revealed ? What need more witnesses ? Then did I endeavour to pray, but was beaten back, because I thought it was in vain, seeing there is no more sacrifice for sin ; yet I prayed. That word, I remember, in the midst of my despair came to mind, “ ABRAHAM in hope believed against hope ;” and therefore I thought, though there was no hope, yet I should “ hope against hope :” This was the only thing that did uphold me then. I drove heavily and heartlessly like PHAROH’S chariots, because I had no hope, although it stood me very much ; I multiplied prayers, but they did not heal me ; I remembered ESAU, who wept until

he got a blessing : And did ESAU, said I, prevail with his earthly father by his importunity, notwithstanding that he could not help him, so as in the end to get some blessing ? And cannot the power and wisdom of God help me, though I cannot conceive how ? His thoughts are above mine. This staid me something, and withal put me to multiply my prayers, and to increase the importunity : But, after I was for three days fearfully shaken, having communicated my case to none, the LORD did at last grant some deliverance, not by removing the cause, but by restraining SATAN. I got a negative peace that I was not troubled, but lived as I was wont for a year after that, until the same temptation occurred again. It is the LORD that raises the wind and storm, and that calms them again ; and, O, what a mercy and power, that ever my conscience should be clear of such a storm ! It is yet a wonder unto me : If he give peace, who can trouble ? Let never any despair after me, though he were certain of hell ; the gladdest word I could hear was, that my sins were pardonable, and that there was a possibility to be saved. In no case man is to despair, God can help in every case.

A third Providence happened to me a year after upon the same occasion. One Sabbath-day at night I had made some vows in my last trouble, that I would seek God more diligently than I had done ; but when the LORD's arrows were out of my reins, I forgot what I promised, and turned as bad as ever, being seduced with carnal company at the College : But the LORD gave me an awakening ; for the sermon I had heard, being a relation of some under terrors of conscience, and their sad condition, had some impressions on my spirit, so that by nine o'clock in my bed, recalling to mind my old sins for some hours, a more violent storm broke out than any I had ever felt : I looked on myself as one that had undoubtedly sinned unpardonably ; I saw in God's countenance terror, wrath, hatred and vengeance ; and some of my natural enmity against the LORD did break out likewise ; so that I struggled, murmured and fretted against God, like the damned in hell, for suffering me to sin unpardonably. Want of hope is

terrible: I was as if in hell; no visible thing did uphold me, only the secret power of God; I was in an hourly expectation when SATAN should come and take me away; and it was beaten upon me with a mighty impression, that I was delivered to the Devil. It was impossible for me to pray; for in approaching to God, I approached to my torment. I sought with sleep to pass away that night, the sorrowfullest that I ever endured, and so wear away my horrors, and hoped the morning would some way cheer me: But I could not sleep, my horror still increased, and hopelessness was the sting of all my evils. It entered into my head once to put hands to myself; but this temptation did not take, for I looked on it as a mad thing to torment myself before the time; it was hell I feared, and should I then run to it? At last, after much tossing, and hardly praying, it pleased God somewhat to allay my horror with these considerations, which I thought some good spirit suggested unto me: Thou knowest not how thou sinnedst, nor rememberest the frame of thy heart at that time; and wilt thou then condemn thyself upon uncertainties? This was rational, but did not calm my heart; it, like cold water cast on a burning, did for a time ease it, but did not heal, because little of God was here. At length the LORD brake in with this, It is certain, that those who have sinned the sin against the HOLY GHOST can never sincerely repent. Yes, said I, that is true. Well, said the LORD, take but this counsel: Suspend for a time judging of yourself, neither concluding that your sin is pardonable, nor that it is not, till you see whether God will give repentance, or not: Therefore, while the LORD spares you life, try him with this, and seek repentance of him: If he give grace, then mayest thou be certain and infallibly persuaded that thou hast not sinned this sin; but, if not, and that God give you not repentance, you can but be damned, and by this course you can be no worse than you are; you may get some peace in the mean time. This prevailed; and the LORD by it calmed my spirit, so within a few days all the impressions of this temptation vanished.

4. During this time I lived in divers sins; as (1.) In seeking and living in pleasures. (2.) Omitting of duties, and excellent occasions of powerful sermons that were at that time preached by the ablest men in the kingdom; likewise I neglected to improve the society of godly Christians. (3.) Neglecting my book and mis-spending my time. (4.) Continuing in a course of enmity against the most godly, and defaming them sometimes falsely. (5.) Playing at cards, dice and other lotteries, and that in a place where severe laws were made against them. (6.) Defaming of my neighbours with pasquils and light poems. (7.) I was light in my conversation. (8.) Wasting and spending much money unnecessarily.

5. From all this I learn, (1.) The time of youth is the most fit season to seek God. I found much tractableness in myself while I was young. (2.) That the best means under heaven for seasoning young ones with the knowledge of God, is the admonition, care and watchfulness of superiors; this was the only thing that did me good. (3.) That the Lord doth usually bless this means with success when it is made conscience of. (*Gen. xviii. 19.*) ABRAHAM shall teach his children, and they shall keep my commandments. The pains of others upon me had some effect on my spirit, even whilst much did not appear unto others. (4.) God is at much pains with sinners ordinarily before he draw them fully, wholly and effectually to himself. I was far from conversion at this time; only I learned that there was a certain glorious state of grace to which some were brought, and that I was a stranger unto it. (5.) God is good to the unthankful and evil, when they are in extremity. He heareth the cry of nature, and did hear me in my extremity when I cried to him. (6.) Let never any man upon any account neglect the use of prayer, or other means, though it seems never so unreasonable; for against hope, sense and reason, when I was put to prayer, it was not in vain. (7.) It is ordinary to seek to other Physicians and means, and to rest on them, before there be a coming to CHRIST. (8.) All false rests will fail, and will

wear away, and must do so without CHRIST; partly because of their decaying nature; partly because, while these continue green and fresh, the soul will not come to CHRIST. (9.) A soul that is a stranger to God and true conversion, may receive some great favours and deliverances at the LORD's hand, and may have particular and clear experiences of the LORD's power and goodness, as AGAR, and be therewith affected. (*Gen.* xvi. 13.) (10.) I find the neglect or careless performance of private duties, especially meditation and prayer, to have ever a great influence on all the decays that happen to a person. (*Exod.* xvii. 11. *Psalms* lvi. 9. *Matt.* xxvi. 41.)

CHAPTER II.

Declaring the Way and Manner of my Conversion, and of some Things that happened then and immediately after.

1. ABOUT the time that the related Providences happened unto me at the University, being at the age of seventeen or eighteen years, our Minister proposed to celebrate the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, of which he gave warning the Sabbath preceding, I purposed (I know not upon what ground) to partake thereof. I had always a reverend esteem of that ordinance, and was under the deep impressions of eating and drinking my own damnation: The LORD did therefore put it into my mind, both by ordinary and extraordinary means, to do my utmost endeavour to attain to a converted condition; nor was I of the judgment that conversion was within the compass of my own power, but I hoped, that doing diligence, the LORD might help; and for this cause set to work immediately, beseeching God that he would effectually work upon my spirit, seeing all former means had been used in vain. I went to sermon, and I found a better relish in the sermon than I had wont to find, and had an ear to hearken more attentively than at other times: After we were gone from Church I spent

the rest of the day in spiritual exercise, and so continued very diligent in seeking the LORD, growing daily in the knowledge and love of his ways; seeing a beauty, and finding a relish that I never knew before. Books and discourses of practical Divinity were sweet, and so were spiritual exercises; I had now tasted of the wine, but had not bought it.

2. But on Wednesday about six o'clock at night, finding by marks I had read in books that I was not converted, and not getting that I expected, I was much troubled. Sometimes I thought that I would suspend communicating at that time; and if this resolution had prevailed, I would not have troubled myself with religion at that time: But hoping still for some good, I continued in my resolution; yet, as I said, when I saw all in vain, and that I met not with what I expected, though I met with more than ever I did before, discouragements did quite overwhelm me; and withal, this apprehension lay heavy on me, and haunted me like a ghost, that it was in God's mind never to do me good: So that fear, discouragement, despair, and some horror and grief, all took hold of me. I resolved to set the next day apart for fasting, and therein to seek God, hoping that these extraordinary means might do something. Hanging therefore by this small thread, I went to prayer with many sad complaints; and the LORD, while I was like the Prodigal Son yet a great way off, ran to meet me. I addressed myself to speak to the LORD CHRIST, and then was there a Gospel-view given me of him; and some considerations and representations of CHRIST were brought into my mind, that he was a Friend and Saviour to poor sinners, their only Helper, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," that died for them, and One willing to be reconciled. What shall I say? While I was thus exercised, a marvellous light shined on my understanding, and with the eyes of my mind, not of my body, I saw that Just One in his glory and love and offices, and beauty of his person; such a sight as I never did see any thing like it, and which did so swallow me up, that I turned speechless, and only

said, What is this? And where am I now? The glory, love, and loveliness of JESUS, revealed to me, did very far exceed all that ever I saw or could see in the world, inso-much, that there was no comparison; I was drawn by this; and after I had recovered, I said, 'O LORD, thou hast overcome me! Heart and hand, and all that I have is thine; I am content to live and die with thee. Begone, poor world and beggarly vanities, and despiteful Devil and flesh, I will serve you no longer; I know now of a Master and Lover, to whom henceforth I will dedicate myself.'

Now are all my doubts looséd; and now I see I have not sinned the sin against the HOLY GHOST. What shall I now do for the LORD? Let heaven and earth, angels and men praise him; for he hath looked graciously upon me, and that in my low condition. What am I or my father's house, that thine eye should be cast on me? There followed upon this such liberty as I thought I could spend the whole night in prayer. Now was I persuaded that I was come to that pitch which formerly I wanted; and all the clouds vanished which were betwixt the LORD and my soul. This continued in its strength only for a quarter of an hour, and then it abated as to its measure, though not altogether; but after I rose from prayer, I went to the fields, and there sang songs of triumph: I comforted myself in my new condition, and I prophesied to myself much more, seeing these were but the beginnings: Nor did I think my happiness could be equalled by any; and now was I fully content to communicate. I longed for some quiet place to pour out my soul unto the LORD, for I thought he would return again; but he did not. I bore the first repulse, hoping that at last the LORD would return. All scruples, fears and doubts were banished. I went to bed; and when I was lying down, Now, said I, sleep securely, and so thou mayest, seeing thou art reconciled to God. Never could I do it one night before; but now let heaven and earth go together.

1. But the LORD withdrawing that comfortable presence which I enjoyed before, humbled me very much; and

mists began to arise, and the sky to darken Yet I sought the LORD though in heaviness of heart; and indeed was not idle: But discouragements increased, and still nothing but absence, insomuch as I thought my condition worse than ever. I sought the LORD night and day, as much through sense of the danger of the want of him, as through any thing else; but all would not do. The Sabbath came, on which the Sacrament was to be given; my fears and sorrows increased, and I was tempted not to communicate. There was one MR. R. B. serving the table; he proposed an objection which some doubting Christians might have: "Many will say," saith he, "Oh! I fear to draw on more guilt in my communicating. But, Oh!" said he, "would to GOD that there were many of this judgment! But I will tell thee, poor doubting thing, whether thou mayest come or not: Tell me, Wast thou seeking CHRIST or not this week?" "Yes," quoth I quietly. "It is like thou hast found something then: And did CHRIST drop in myrrh in the lock of the door of thy heart before he went away? Know it, poor soul, he will come again, for that is his token; and thou mayest come here, and in his name I invite thee." This drew me to come, though I found no sensible presence at that time; and thereupon ensued great fears. Yet the same MR. R. B. did in the afternoon encourage me again, so that I resolved to take courage.

2. Finding these discouragements did no good, and that comforting my heart did no ill, I resolved to cheer myself, and used some general encouraging considerations, and therewith was some way strengthened to go about my work. Thou art now engaged to be the LORD's servant; wait upon him, and trust thy reward unto him. This advice did no ill. Then sermons were very sweet unto me, and so was the exercise of all spiritual duties, so that I grew in the knowledge of the ways of GOD; and the more I knew, I was the more delighted in him: Every spiritual duty did relish with me, and I was not well but when out of one duty into another; yea, the most cold prayers and discourses concerning godliness were sweet, and opportunities

of prayer and getting good were highly prized by me. I began within a month's time to be more slack ; but the LORD warned me of it, and I mended my pace.

3. Thus was the everlasting seed sown that was the light of glory then arising upon my soul : But this did not long continue ; for shortly after, there arose a more grievous storm, and of longer continuance than any I had met with yet : The Sacrament being to be given in the town about that time, I resolved to partake thereof, to see if I could get any thing from GOD ; and for this cause prepared myself diligently, and went about the work of self-examination : But being but young, and having small experience of my own heart, I could get little clearness ; however this exercise stirred up some things ready to die in me, and I did still grow in the knowledge and love of the truth ; until one afternoon, which I had set apart for seeking of GOD, I was reading on *Luke* xxii., where CHRIST did eat the Pass-over with his disciples ; and reading these words, “ And the twelve Apostles with him,” I know not how it came to pass, but, reflecting on my deadness in reading such love as this, I concluded I had no grace ; and withal observing how CHRIST was so familiar with his Apostles, and how unkind to me, the apprehensions of distance and separation from CHRIST were so fearful, that incontinently the wind was up very boisterous, and I was brought again to the rack. Then did my evil nature discover itself to me, and then did I murmur against GOD, that was so kind to others, and yet kept such distance with me ; I envied, as I thought, the very apostles. Fretting and murmuring did but like rain increase the floods ; so that in sorrow and bitterness of heart I walked up and down for want of GOD whom I could not find, and under the sensible apprehensions of his wrath. All these things with the fearful frame of my spirit, did put me in great horror, so that I lost almost all hope. Then was I again vehemently urged that I had sinned the sin against the HOLY GHOST ; so that I could get nothing spoken for myself. And that which did heighten all this was, that the law brake in upon me, that

“sin might become exceeding sinful, and wrought in me all manner of disobedience;” for my heart murmured, fretted and swelled against God for guiding me thus; and, having terrible apprehensions of him, I could not love him: And now, said conscience, see how thou smellest already of hell; how canst thou imagine that God will look upon thee that hast such a cursed nature!; the brand of the reprobate is upon thee; why wilt thou therefore pray or hope any more? Yet, notwithstanding would I pray, and that frequently; I know not what put me out to it. Many times did I grovel on the ground, and sought his favour and compassion; then was it that my tears were my meat; then was prayer bitterness to me, and my mouth closed, and I as it were bound with bands; for God was never more terrible than when I approached to him in prayer. I remember one day, praying out in the fields, I had this expression; LORD, if thou wilt for nothing else compassionate me, yet compassionate my young years; and yet I know not how thou canst break thy faithful word, who hast said, that such as sin against the HOLY GHOST shall never be pardoned. Nature seeks its own preservation, and therefore, having no other shift to make, I applied myself to my LORD only: And now my greatest trouble was concerning the unpardonableness of my sins, especially that particular sin; yet would my spirit calm betwixt hands, and be at ease for a while. I thought the Devil had a great hand in my temptations: For said I, While I was walking after the flesh, there was nothing of this seen or heard; but since I have come to and engaged with CHRIST, is all this come upon me. I continued in the extremity of this condition but a few days, never opening my case to any: I was sent for by my relations upon some emergent occasion; I was glad of the opportunity, because by that means I should shun the Sacrament that was to be given about that time; but, coming there, my horrors increased; I thought every creature happy but myself; meat, drink and company were a burden to me.

4. While I was thus hopeless and helpless, not knowing

what to do ; to aggravate all my miseries, I was to hear a dead lifeless Preacher : Ah, and must I, said I, have this with all my evils, to come under a dead Ministry ? But I went with the rest, thinking it indifferent whom I heard, seeing I saw it beyond the power of means to help me. The text was, “PAUL an Apostle of JESUS CHRIST.” (1 *Tim.* i. 1.) I went betwixt sermons to a secret place, and there poured out my soul to God in prayer ; but felt no refreshing. I came unto the afternoon’s sermon again ; but, behold the LORD’s goodness ! From an unexpected hand, and from so general a text, and at such an unexpected time, the LORD did send a calm, and did that which I thought was impossible, namely, clear me fully (after all my considerations had been in vain) that I had not sinned unpardonably, from these words which he cited in his sermon, “Howbeit God forgave me, because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief.” The SPIRIT said, Whatever thy sins have been, they have been done in unbelief, or whilst thou wast an unbeliever, when thou knewest nothing of God. This was enough ; God may make any thing strong to do his work. The Devil and all his storms were rebuked and calmed, and that suddenly, and so fully, that I was never after assaulted with temptations of sinning against the HOLY GHOST. My heart was made holy, and I put on a full resolution to seek the LORD till I should find him : And now I had good hopes, seeing my sins were pardonable ; and this hope produced a cheerful endeavour to seek the LORD, which I did, and was labouring to do good unto others, and to spread the knowledge of CHRIST, by which means I daily grew in the knowledge and love of God.

5. I look upon this as the time of my conversion, and that then the everlasting seed was sown ; that heaven was begun, and CHRIST formed within me, upon these considerations, (1.) Because I found my heart changed : As to my company, I hated the most strict before, but now I loved and delighted most in the most holy and strict people : And this love was universal, so that when either I heard tell of a godly man, or saw him, my heart warmed ; and

the “love of the brethren” I look on as a sign that I am “translated from death to life.” (1 *John* iii. 14.) (2.) Because I found a new esteem of, a great delight in, and love to and longing after the ordinances of CHRIST and his commands ; I saw a glory in them, every thing that savoured of God was sweet. (3.) Because I found my heart at that instant mortified to the world, and the esteem of and delight in it gone. (4.) Because my soul did see, esteem, love and delight in the LORD JESUS, and preferred Him not only to the world, but to saints, duties and ordinances ; and made a perpetual, cordial and personal covenant to live with Him and serve Him. (5.) I found a glorious, universal, and abiding change, wrought by the LORD himself, “from sin and SATAN to GOD,” and “from darkness to light.” All things were then new. (6.) I was carried with great zeal for the LORD against all sin and sinners ; and did strive to draw all men to CHRIST, by instructing and exhorting them. (7.) I found a new light discovering to me the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and making me from that time forward to understand the Scriptures, the exercise of saints recorded in Scripture ; and I delighted not only in the history of the Scripture, but in the prophecies, promises, doctrines and spiritual part thereof, which I never relished before. Then were wisdom and her ways pleasant, and became plain to me, which were before locked up as a mystery. (8.) In respect of the LORD’s after-dealing with me, and of his former dealing ; for he was preparing me before, and driving me out of my false rests. And ever after, although there have been shakings and interruptions, yet hath that spark never died which was kindled, but hath been growing more and more ; some good ever remained, and, in my sorest decays, the impressions of God’s dealing at this time remained, so that there was a longing after the First Husband, which was the means to reduce me out of a back-sliding condition : And therefore I look upon it as the “well of water springing up to everlasting life.”

6. I have looked on the LORD’s dealings towards me, and

what this manifestation of himself in such a manner might speak to me, and what might be the ends thereof; and, after inquiry, I found them to be, (1.) To draw the soul to God by faith and love. He lets us taste his wine, that it may be bought; and therefore is there a “seeing of the Son” and a “believing on Him.” (*John* vi. 40; xx. 29.) O love, and come to this Glorious One, and having discovered Him to be the “LORD of Glory, open the everlasting doors,” yea, and when this love is dead, quicken it again, by remembering Him. (2.) To strengthen our faith in his love, and our hope of heaven; and therefore hath he given this testimony of his love, revealing to me that rare sight hid from the world, to be a pledge and earnest of heaven; and upon this to build and strengthen my faith, both in drawing near to Him, and expecting all good from Him. This revelation of JESUS, enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying, is to me the earnest of the inheritance. (2 *Cor.* i. 22.) (3.) To comfort me in my choice, showing that I have not cast away all for shadows. (4.) To make known himself in his condescending power and glory, of which I might doubt if I had not seen with mine own eyes. Why should I doubt of this his power, when I have myself seen such a miracle, the blind eye opened, the dead heart quickened, and the heart wholly changed? “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.” (1 *John* v. 10.) O to be raised from hell to heaven!

7. I have likewise been thinking what this storm immediately ensuing should mean; my being cast down into hell, after lifting up to heaven. It was, (1.) To let me see the evil of mine own heart, and exceeding sinfulness thereof; by the murmuring and fierce resistance I made, I perceive that by nature I am a bitter enemy to God, full of poison: To humble me, and make me acknowledge his grace and love the more. (2.) To be a ground of faith when in like straits again, and to have a proof of his power; the LORD in my extremity, when there was no appearance of help, when there was nothing in me but frowardness and rebellion, when I cried, yet pitied me, conquering both my sin

and misery : And why should I doubt him now again ? He ever helped me when in extremity, yea, when my case was most desperate. (3.) To acquaint me with the LORD's ways of conversion, and with his terrors, that I might be a better guide unto others. (4.) That God might by me show a pattern of all long-suffering, who obtained mercy being so wild. (5.) To show his justice as he is the Governor of the world. I was very wicked, and by the law deserved severe punishment ; I trampled on God's kindness and goodness : And therefore did the righteous LORD make me find sin bitter, and for this cause delivered me over to SATAN ; He took in his own hand and corrected me, not willing that I should die and be condemned with the world.

8. I will conclude with remarking some instructions and lessons I learned from these Providences. (1.) There is ordinarily in the day of espousals something extraordinary of God's love and glory manifested ; the fatted calf is killed when first the Prodigal is brought home. No less can assure them of their FATHER's love, nor take away their wildness, and make them comply with their new life : Hence, " I will make thee sing as in the days when I brought thee out of the land of Egypt." (*Hosea* ii. 15.) (2.) The soul in conversion closeth chiefly with the person of CHRIST, " If thou wilt return, return to me ;" (*Jer.* iv. 1 ;) and the not doing hereof is complained of, " They return, but not to the most High." (*Hosea* vii. 16.) (3.) Grace makes a great, wonderful, and universal change ; changing the outward life and inward frame. " All things are new ;" new prayers, new love, new company, new opinions and new principles : A man is much different from what he was, not only while a profane man, but even while a civil or moral man. (4.) There may be much corruption to be mortified in a soul newly brought in to God : For notwithstanding all this diligence, delight in duties and joy, I was full of ignorance, unbelief ; selfish, proud, conceited and light. Grace is indeed but small when it begins ; little faith, patience, and rooted love. (5.) Continued kindness to the LORD speaks more than any particular enjoyment, though

never so extraordinary. “Mark the perfect man’s” end; see what all ends in. Conclude not peremptorily from beginnings of any, either as to good or evil; I could build little on this, if I did not see it backed with an after-tract of holiness. (6.) God himself is more eminently seen, in the mercies of his people, than instruments; and therefore ordinarily none doth good but himself, and that not in the way, thing, manner, and time they propose unto themselves, but as he proposes. (7.) It is possible folks may meet with more sharp convictions after conversion than before, especially if they have not been well hammered with the Law. “After ye were enlightened, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:” (*Heb. x. 32:*) Which are not to be confined to outward, but inward likewise. But though they create sorrow and discouragements unto them, yet have not they received this spirit of bondage, but the SPIRIT of adoption; and they may come to God as a Father: Preternaturally, indeed, and through mistakes and corruptions, it is hindered that it vents not itself in these filial motions; and so they may be troubled with this spirit of bondage: Howsoever they received it not of God; it is not their allowance.

Sometime after I fell into a sad decay both of life and consolation; the steps of it were these.

Step 1. Was unbelief and doubting of my interest in God, and of his love, through a wrong construction of Providences, and ignorance of the covenant of grace; so as I was in JOB’s condition; though I had prayed, and God had answered me, yet could I not believe it; I could not believe I was so happy as to be converted: And, having such sad thoughts of myself, I had a bad construction of God and all his ways to me, inasmuch as I thought God did in wrath take away my terrors. Ah! said I, Time was when the LORD was taking pains with me, and did lay siege with the Law against my soul; He put me in his fire and furnace, but now will He take no more care of me; now hath He raised his siege, and given me over: O miserable man that I am! I am left now to the judicial

plague of an hard heart ; I am to pine out the rest of my days in vanity, sin, and trouble. And when my heart was easier, This, said I, is but to make me secure ; it is but a delusion : Which had these sad effects upon my soul ; (1.) Strange and hard thoughts of God as of an enemy, as one that envied our good. (2.) I judged all that God said of his love in his word to be but compliments or snares to intrap ; and so made him a liar, and by this means was made incapable to be taken with CHRIST's allurements in the Gospel. (3.) Hence I could neither love nor believe Him, nor by any means be drawn to him : For how could I love Him in whom I believed I had no other interest than that of a cruel Judge, ready to condemn, and watching for evil against me ? (4.) I had no will to keep communion with Him. When the Israelites said, " We have no portion or inheritance from the sons of JESSE," the next was, " Every man to his tents." " Thou shalt call me, My FATHER, and shalt not depart from me." (*Jer.* iii. 19.) I was heartless or slight in duties whereby He was honoured, and communion with Him entertained ; wanting love and hope. Through unbelief my hands were weakened, and I departed from the living God. (6.) Finding no satisfaction in God, which I could not do whilst these principles remained. " Forsaking God, the Fountain of living waters, I hewed broken cisterns." (*Jer.* ii. 12.)

Step 2. Notwithstanding all this, I had hopes, that yet I might be converted, and therefore did not despair. Some secret thoughts in duties would drop in persuading me to hope, and some relish in duties : Likewise, since I was persuaded by a strong hand my sins were pardonable ; this made me continue in the means. SATAN sought to beat me from this, or at least to make me remiss in them ; and, knowing that palpable vanities would not do, (for I had been burnt with that candle already,) he would compass this by making me close with an appearance of good, which he did thus : I studied Short-hand, in the study of which, aiming at perfection in it, I was excessive and so taken up altogether from any other thing, that I could scarce get

the form of duties gone about twice a day. In the end I resolved to give way, cheated with this, that, the sooner I acquired knowledge herein, I should the sooner have leisure to wait on God; but however, this spirit of whoredom caused me to err, and took away my heart.

Step 3. When I was called home, through want of godly company, and dead formal society among which I lived, I was brought a further length of decay, even to omit duties almost altogether; contenting myself ordinarily with bed-prayers, and slight reading of Scripture and godly books. Several things had influence on this; the want of a convenient room, a prevailing spirit of sloth that would not break through difficulties, some false hopes that all would be well: Sometimes my heart would secretly despair, and prophesy things would never be better, and it is in vain to pray; through these things it came to pass that my heart turned altogether out of tune, and heeded not my work at all.

Step 4. Then, through want of the fear of God, and unwatchfulness, did I become vain and light in my conversation; I followed lies and vanities; complied with sinful customs, made no conscience of what company I came into, inventing to myself "instruments of music," seeking content from the creature. When company was away, my heart turned melancholy, but did not turn to God. I would pray when visited with any disappointments; but still through interruption, lost more ground than I gained, so as I went daily down the stream, and grew exceeding hard-hearted: Spiritual duties were a weariness and a burden: And thus I was not only discouraged and remiss in duties, slighting them altogether, but grew very untender and carnal in my conversation.

Whence I took a fifth step, which was, going to some relations to pass a visit, where there were many professors and much profession; there I got a dead stroke, so as it is a wonder how I ever recovered.

6. My sins were, (1.) Slighting and omitting of duties public and private. (2.) Vain and light conversation like

the world ; the show of my countenance witnessed against me. (3.) Idle jesting. (4.) Breaking the Sabbath with idleness and mine own words. (5.) Following the lusts of the flesh and divers vanities. (6.) Sensuality. (7.) Doing no good, neither glorifying God, nor edifying others, nor profiting myself.

7. Notwithstanding all this, the LORD upheld me by his right hand, and kept in the dying spark, that all these waters could not quite extinguish it ; I fell not totally away, nor was I utterly forsaken of God. (*Jer. v. 5.*) For these things remained : (1.) I did pray, meditate and read now and then ; I was not driven altogether from duties ; I did not show myself to have no knowledge at all, in not calling on God. (*Psalms xiv. 4.*) (2.) There remained a secret and quiet hope, things would be well, and a looking up to him ; though “cast down, yet not in despair.” (3.) Love and affection to and estimation of the people of God, and delight in them, still remained. (4.) Dissatisfiedness with my present condition, groaning under and mourning when I remembered the days of old ; this course was not pleasant, I was like a bone out of joint ; these matters were not my element. (5.) Some love to my First Husband remained, and a preferring of the first course even in its worst before this ; even as one prefers the day to the night : And often would I say that word, with Job, “O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the LORD shined upon my head !” (*Job xxix. 2, 4.*) (6.) I knew that it was ill with me ; though I slept, yet I was not so dead as to be without sense or knowledge altogether.

8. These things had influence on my decay mainly ; (1.) Want of outward and inward afflictions : I had “no changes, therefore feared not God.” (*Psalms lv. 19.*) The spurs were out of my side, terrors were away, which drove me to duty. (2.) In respect of the decay of that inward sweetness which accompanied duty formerly ; God, having brought me out of Egypt into the wilderness, had withdrawn that. (3.) Many temptations from within and from without, which the LORD kept up before. Now the LORD

let out my original corruption, and I found nothing but a dead hard heart from within, and discouragement from without, and this made the way more hard. (4.) The powerful means were removed; the good company and powerful sermons were gone which did feed me. (5.) Godless company that had no piety, that did eat out all religion out of me. (6.) The formal, carnal, and lifeless conversation of some (much cried-up) professors made me even despair. (7.) Too eagerly following of lawful comforts, and employments and studies. (8.) Growing remiss in the exercise of duties, especially of private prayer and meditation. (9.) Not looking to ills in the beginning, but letting them run on; not heeding things, or considering my ways, but sleeping: And therefore became my garden overspread with thorns.

CHAPTER III.

Of my Recovery from Darkness.

THE LORD did not raise me all at once out of my backslidden condition, nor without interruption, but very leisurely. The seed was sown, and it grew; and I knew not how. As it was sown with little noise, so did it grow up quietly, and had many interruptions and Winters, going backward and forward; like the filling sea, some waves gained ground, and some succeeding lost and abated, but a new overflowing regained all. There would come a wave of the SPIRIT that would overflow largely, but after that a little ebb; and then, when I little expected, there would come a wave that would set me as far forward as ever again; and then a little decay, and then a recovery, so as for a long time I was tossed up and down like a locust, wearied of myself, and of my life, and righteousness, and enlargements of heart, and of all these glories. I was after humiliation of heart, by a strong yet quiet hand, at the command of God, with little din made to believe

and rest on CHRIST, so as I had never done before ; and in process of time, the LORD had almost perfected his work before I had thought he had well begun. The way and steps of this my recovery were :

Step 1. After I had long departed from God, and so gone far away, the LORD made me unsatisfied with my present condition ; even in this laughing madness was my heart sorrowful : And when in my jollity, any time I thought on my former state, I would say, ‘ O what a sad condition am I in now ! “ O that it were with me as in months past ! ” O that I were under CHRIST’s terror again ! His glooms were better than this at best.’

Step 2. I had thoughts to return to my First Husband, but was beaten from this with the apprehensions that it was not time ; and hence it became a great case to me, whether the LORD may assault a soul with a spirit of conviction, and leave it and come again ? Sometimes I thought I was judicially hardened, and my time gone ; but the LORD did take the thorn away, and made me hope, by casting a book into my hand, the author of which writes of compunction ; and he states the case, namely, ‘ Whether a man once under convictions, and these dying without fruit, can be again converted ? ’ He determined it affirmatively, with such reasons as then convinced me, so as I resolved to try, though I found therein a great difficulty.

Step 3. Was the setting about the means, with prayer, reading, and meditation. I rested not in bare fruitless wishings, but I was helped to set myself to seek the LORD, though with difficulty. I continued praying morning and evening for some time, and preparing my heart, notwithstanding all my discouragements and indisposition, and little success ; for my heart continued hard, dead, and blind, and conversation carnal, and duties were a burden to me.

Step 4. Having for some twenty days prayed, mourned, and complained, and not finding any life, but my deadness increasing, and hearing no word of CHRIST, I began to have suspicions that sentence indeed was passed against me, and that I was sealed under the plague of a hard heart :

and was tempted to cast aside duties as vain : And then I said, ‘O poor soul, thou wilt never get so much as a tender heart again, nor so much as once to pour out this thy soul to God before thou die.’ While I was thus exercised, the LORD was pleased to let me again taste some of the sweetness of duties ; for one time I went in the multitude of my thoughts to the LORD in prayer, and it pleased the SPIRIT to blow and to open my heart, so as I prayed with abundance of tears and great liberty, and I found much sweetness in the work. Now, although I was not satisfied with this, yet I was comforted, in that it was a proof to me that the LORD had not quite forsaken me, and that after this there would come better.

Step 5. I began to fall more closely to work, and put other sails on, and more irons in the fire ; then did I write diaries, make vows and covenants, and fall to the work of self-examination, and write some infant notions of practical Divinity, and my meditations on several texts, which did me good, and at first helped me forward.

Step 6. The LORD by duties wearied me with them, mortified me to my self-righteousness, and did with labour bring down my heart. (1.) He discovered unto me, and let me feel the evil and power of my heart : Then did I groan under the burden of a dead, blind, and carnal heart, and the body of death was my great exercise, and heart-ills, especially hardness of heart : And thus more sensibly than ever I was wearied and burdened with my heart, though not in horror. (2.) The LORD let me see the sinfulness of all my duties and best actions ; the formality, lifelessness, and corrupt principles whence they proceeded, and my great short-comings, so as I knew these were not my saviours, and turned mine eyes from them. (3.) I was wearied with myself, my sins, and duties, dragged through various dispensations, and burdened with fruitless labour : I saw I could not put my heart in a frame, nor keep my heart in a frame when it was in it, but still did break my resolutions. My duties yielded neither peace nor satisfaction, nor did they mortify sin ; for I was but rowing

against the stream, and after a long time worse in my own conceit than before: I was dying sometimes, and living again. When like to die, the LORD would look upon me, and put it in my heart to seek him, and would send down influences, and enlarge my soul with love and desires after himself, and sorrow for sin, and new resolutions; and this would quicken me for a while, and make me hope and seek the LORD; and then again my soul would be overclouded, and I would turn unwatchful, and fall to my ordinary sins, and depart from the LORD: And with this I was vexed, because my resolutions were broken; and I was discouraged, and despaired ever to come up; and was weakened, thinking, How shall I look the LORD in the face? What security can I now give him for my behaviour? Yet, whilst thus discouraged, not knowing what to do, and unable to think of what might do me good, God would shine in upon my soul; and among a hundred visits of this kind he gave me, and by which he many times restored my dying heart to life, he was pleased still to come out and create a new thing, some new ground, and the floods would still increase. How often have I said, ‘Now, sure the LORD will come, and will not tarry; now I shall keep fast what I have.’ But I was deceived: “All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof withereth.” I have said sometimes in my extremity, ‘Now, what is it that can quicken me? Surely I can never recover out of this, though God should open windows in heaven.’ Then would the LORD show his power and condescension, and would quicken me, and put away my fears, and make me look cheerful, and cause me to put on new resolutions. In a word, I was thus wearied and burdened in a wilderness for the space of three full years, and poured from vessel to vessel.

Step 7. When all failed, and that I was at the point of dying, the LORD would send some extraordinary thing, some fit word, some good book, that would quicken me and strengthen me to spend half nights in prayer. Sometimes, meeting with other Christians, the LORD would rain some

seasonable word; and nothing did me more good than stories relating to God's dealing with others. Likewise, being in the South, the LORD visited me with a powerful Ministry, which did keep in my dying life, and greatly encouraged me; many a time was my swooning life revived, and I brought from the gates of death. These waterings insensibly sanctified me more and more both in heart and conversation, and made heavenly things relish with my soul; and by them I was made more capable to receive the LORD, and my eyes therewith kept waking.

Step 8. After I was thus humbled, I proceeded another step, even to resign myself to the LORD. It was occasioned by reading a sermon of MR. ANDREW GRAY's, on these words, "My son, give me thy heart." I cried out, 'O LORD, though I cannot command this evil heart to thee; yet, if I have power or right of it, I here legally renounce that right in thy favour, and make over myself to thee, and all that is within me: Now, LORD, take me at my word, and take advantage of this to claim me as thine own; accept the real motions of my will: O that CHRIST would now look on me as his, and make use of this right!' In the strength of this I walked for some time, though it did not always satisfy; yet I could always say, 'LORD, thou offerest thyself to me, and I cannot take thee; LORD, I likewise offer myself to thee, thou mayest take me, but wilt not: O! others take advantage of my bargains! O that CHRIST would do so, and challenge a claim and right to me! LORD, thou sayest thou art willing to do me good; LORD, I offer myself to thee to do with me what thou wilt; only let me not be guided by myself.' Here came I, and I did stick and wrestle for some time, striving to come forth. This was in July, and I continued till the latter end of August thus.

From which I observe this: (1.) That folk may contract by backsliding what they will not in a very long time recover again, and the dregs of it may remain after they are indeed begun to return to the LORD: The security and indispositions I then contracted, I am not free

from yet. (2.) A man's whole life is but a conversion; and the LORD after every kind of backsliding draws after the same way as at the first conversion, yea, and deals so with them as they may seem never to have been converted before. Yea, I found a more distinct preparatory work after my first drawing than ever before: For the LORD did things suddenly at first, and in a very little time did let me see that I was undone, that I was not converted, nor could convert myself; and the insufficiency of duties and an unconverted condition, with God's wrath, had some impressions on my spirit: And then the LORD revealed CHRIST unto me, on whom I believed, and with whom I closed. But now the LORD did draw me very clearly, and insist in every step so, as that all the knowledge I have of the work of preparation, I have it from what I met with after I knew CHRIST, more than from what I met with at first. (3.) The strongest, last and bitterest enemy the LORD hath, and which he abborreth most, is spiritual pride; against this he setteth himself mainly; I mean, the vain-glory folk have in their own strength, and their own righteousness. It is hard to get our high conceits down, and to glorify God and make use of his righteousness. It is easy to let a man see he is not converted, that he cannot save himself; but it is hard persuading him that he can do nothing, not so much as be thankful for the least mercy: Ye will not persuade him to live, and live only in, to, and by another, and submit himself, his will in all things to God. (4.) It is the frequency and constancy of God's waterings that do good, rather than any measure of a particular visitation; and from this more love may be gathered, "If my words abide in you. He that endureth to the end shall be saved." (*John* xv. 7.) (5.) Unwatchfulness is a constant and deadly evil, prejudicial to a progress in grace.

Meantime the LORD intending to settle me, made me learn to live by faith. The way and manner whereof, as I remember, I shall set down; which was the last step of my recovery.

1. Finding no rest still, I began to be sorrowful and disconsolate, and, like PHARAOH's chariots, to drive on heavily. I continued waiting in the means; and one day, as I was reading, I read these words in *Haggai* ii. 17, "I smote ye in all the labour of your hands, yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD." I applied this spiritually; that is, thought I, GOD hath smitten me in all my labours, duties, resolutions and vows, and for all this I turned not to GOD: But wherein am I not turned? Have I not left my sins, mourned, prayed, read and meditated? What remains yet to be done? What duty or means do I slight? What pains, in my power, have I with-holden? I therefore cast mine eyes upon all duties; and while I was thus searching, some blessed motion was suggested to me, that I had all my life-time slighted the duty of believing, and had not turned to GOD by faith; therefore until this thou do, GOD will ever continue smiting thee in all the labours of thy hand, "for without faith it is impossible to please GOD:" And it hath been the want of this, and this only, that hath blasted thee in all thine endeavours. Faith, quoth I, astonished, what is this! LORD, now keep me from a delusion. 'Yēs, faith, of which so much is spoken in Scripture, that is the main grace,' said the SPIRIT. These things made me some way apprehensive of the matter.

2. I now found that faith had a great place in religion; and withal, looking to myself, I found that I had very little practised it, and was as great a stranger to it as those disciples (*Acts* xix. 1, 2) were to the knowledge of the HOLY GHOST; I knew not what it was, nor had formerly exercised it, or distinctly and expressly heard of it; for this ill principle remained with me, namely, I believed that none should believe but persons so and so qualified, which until I could find, I thought I was to lie in my prison and mourn.

3. The LORD did convince me fully that I should believe, and that it was the duty of every one: For as I said before, I thought that only persons so and so qualified

were bound to believe ; but the merciful LORD himself did unloose this knot, by calling me to him, convincing me that it was my duty so to do ; and thereby the chains wherewith SATAN had for a long time bound me, and kept me from the distinct exercise and life of faith, were broken : And that which is wonderful is, I heard it an hundred times pressed in sermons to believe, and yet until that day was never persuaded it was my duty to believe, nor never minded that exercise at all. The grounds whereby I was then persuaded to believe, or that believing was my duty, yea, and that all were bound to believe, which was the first point, were these : (1.) That Scripture, “ This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 *John* iii. 23.) Then it is commanded, concluded I ; and why is it not duty ? Nay, is it not the great command ? Dost thou question that prayer is thy duty ? Truly it is thy duty, because commanded : Then faith, or receiving of CHRIST, being commanded likewise, it is thy duty as well as prayer.—(2.) Wicked unregenerate men are commanded to believe ; and it is the great duty, more acceptable to God than any thou canst perform. “ What is the work of God, that we should work it ?” (*John* vi. 28.) The answer (29) was very contrary to their expectations : “ This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent :” This is the first, the great command, and a command tying even such as were the Jews. (3.) That Scripture was brought to my mind, “ ABRAHAM by believing glorified God,” (*Rom.* iv. 20,) compared with *Numbers* xx. 12, “ Because ye believed not, to sanctify my name before this people, therefore ye shall not bring this people into the land promised.” Now, seeing believing glorifies God, thou art bound unto it ; for every man is bound to glorify God : Who questions this ? Believing glorifies God, in acknowledging his power, goodness, and rich grace. (4.) The SPIRIT urged this argument, The wicked are punished for not believing, therefore it is their duty to believe. See *Psalms* lxxviii. 32, 33, “ He consumed their days in vanity, because they believed not on him ;” and so shall he do

with thee, if thou do not believe. (5.) This was confirmed to me by the first Scripture, and by the language of Providences: What else could I call my continual disappointments and fruitless labours, but a call to me to try what this might do? My days were consumed, and therefore by my stroke I might read my sin.

4. The LORD having by these persuaded and convinced me that it was my duty to believe, and rolled this stone away from the sepulchre; he proceeded next to answer my manifold objections, which then did begin to swarm and keep me from believing. The main were: (1.) I cannot believe, and therefore why am I called to believe? It is the gift of God, and why should I hammer out a faith of my own bowels? This will not be accepted. It was answered, The LORD, by thus drawing and inviting thee, gives thee power to come, as it was when he called on dead LAZARUS to live and come forth. And besides, thou canst not sanctify a Sabbath, nor pray; yet it is thy duty, and thou goest about it as thou canst; so do here. Yea, to the wearied it is not impossible. A second Objection was, I fear I may presume. It was answered, To believe, in obedience to a command, is no presumption: When thou receivest CHRIST, and in this act believest on and retest in him for pardon, this being obedience cannot be presumption, for it is no presumption to obey God; to believe uncalled, is presumption, or unwarrantable.—*Objection 3.* I am not enough humbled, my heart is dead and hard, and I am altogether insensible of my condition, and therefore how can I be called to believe? For it is the “weary” and “heavy-laden” that are called to come. It was answered, It may be so, but this gives no right to come; it is the call and command of God, and Gospel-offers, which give a right, and not any qualification: Thou art miserable, and naked, and wild; all is true: But how can it be otherwise, when thou hast lived at such a distance from CHRIST, who is the Fountain of life? If thou wouldest believe, He would give thee what thou wantest; there is no other way of receiving life, but by coming to him. (*John v. 40.*)

Objection 4. But I cannot prize CHRIST, nor am I prepared. It was answered, That as faith fetches all from him, so fetches it prizing of him too; for if faith fetches all from CHRIST, then it brings nothing to CHRIST but deadness, blindness and sinfulness: Come to him for grace to prize him; if thou once wouldest “believe,” then CHRIST would be “precious” to thee. (1 *Pet.* ii. 7.) Emptiness is the best qualification: “The hungry He filleth with good things, but the rich He sendeth away empty.” There is no more required than what makes thee willing to accept Him; if therefore thou be willing to accept CHRIST, thou prizest him sufficiently, and art sufficiently prepared.

Objection 5. Thou findest no glorious power drawing thee. It was answered, Yet I find the LORD in his word calling me, and this is as sufficient a ground to thee as though he came personally and visibly here, and desired this of thee; and therefore do now what thou wouldest do then.

I confess, by answering these objections, and by other arguments, the LORD did sensibly and seasonably, and with a strong hand, convince me that it is my duty to believe. O, will he take such a vile worm as I? Yes, he will; for thou art the fittest person in the world for him to glorify his grace on. The LORD did incessantly follow me with these thoughts, yea, I found a sensible power dealing with me.

5. The LORD did also by suitable Providences back the call of his word upon my spirit; for on a day of private humiliation it was my ordinary way to read *Heb.* xi. and the first Epistle of PETER, where so much is spoken of faith. Then all Scripture concerning faith, and treatises speaking thereof, and meditations of it, were sweet, which now I began to understand. I was now come as it were to a new world, and there was such a stir upon my spirit as I never found the like before: Fain would I believe, but Ah I could not! I found a spirit of resistance, there was a blindness upon my eyes; I knew not what believing was, nor on whom. On the one hand, the LORD by his commands, motives, earnest invitations, promises, and answer-

ing objections, yea, and terrible threatenings in case of unbelief, was pushing me forward, and that speedily ; for all doors were shut but this of faith : For I could neither pray nor do any thing, in respect of the sinfulness of it without faith, and therefore this behoved to be my first work. On the other hand, ignorance of CHRIST, and of the duty of believing, and fear of prẽsumption and believing on my own strength, did toss me like a ball ; I knew not what to do, but like a weak child stuck in the birth : O, said I, how can I believe ! “ LORD, help my unbelief,” and pity me, thou who hast been with me so wonderfully through the great and terrible wilderness, and brought me even to the borders of the good land ; O help here ! Well, said the LORD, do but rely on CHRIST for life with confidence that He will help thee. In this and to this I found some strength, and then I endeavoured it, and said, Behold, I come to thee, LORD, do not thou cast me off. But the LORD said, Come not only to see what CHRIST will do with thee, but likewise rest upon and believe from his goodness that He will do all that thou standest in need of. Well then, answered my heart, since it is so, I will take my hazard, and on thee I cast myself, come of it what will. And verily that which seemed in my most serious exercise to be the notion of faith by which I closed with CHRIST was, a certain kind of persuasion and rest in it that I had, the LORD would do me good, and help me in all things : And the great thing that was pressed upon me was, not to doubt of CHRIST, especially his good-will ; in which in some measure I rested.*

After much struggle, ‘ Well, (said I,) O LORD, since it is so, that I must of necessity believe, against sense and reason, and as I can, I do give my soul to thee, and trust thou wilt save me from all my sins ;’ and though this be counted presumption, yet I will trust in him. I was much strengthened herein from *Job* xiii. 15, “ Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.” Though all things seem to cry

* I dare not say, this account of faith is more agreeable to ST. PAUL’S, (*Heb.* xi. 4,) (nor so agreeable,) than that he gives in the second Chapter.—EDIT.

Despair and die, and though for my presumption he should kill me, yet I will trust in him; and now, LORD, since I have sealed this bargain, and closed with thee, send strength, not for any thing in me, but because I am thy servant, that I may honour thee my Master.

6. I had no sooner spoken these words, but the LORD revealed himself and his love. Then were my eyes opened to see love in all dispensations. O this was a heart-ravishing consideration! The LORD, that followed me many a weary day, never rested till he had completed his work with me, and till he had engaged me to believe. O the love of CHRIST! If CHRIST had no power to help a poor sinner, but had love, he would even die over it.

7. From this I observe, (1.) That before ever a soul can believe, he must be called of GOD; for else no man would, could, or should come. (2.) That the immediate end of effectual calling is to receive CHRIST by faith, or to believe in and rest on him for all things. (*John* vi. 28; *Matt.* xxii. 3; *Isaiah* lv. 1.) For though the Saints be said to be called to heaven, to peace, to be holy, yet is not this the immediate end of effectual calling, but, as I said, to receive JESUS CHRIST, and all things freely offered in the Gospel. (3.) This call is inward as well as outward, borne in upon our spirit. GOD deals with the heart, for the outward call will never do alone. (4.) This call is a glorious call, and stamped with majesty and authority. As it is the LORD that calls, so doth he stamp his own name on it, so that the soul knows it is GOD that is dealing with him: And so, “where the word of a King is, there is power;” and “who may say unto him, What doest thou?” (5.) Faith is neither to love CHRIST, nor to be content to take him, for that is wrought already; (to love a person, and to be content to marry him, is not marriage, it is but a disposition to marriage;) nor yet to believe that he is able to save, or to hope; but it is to believe on CHRIST, that he is yours, and will bestow himself and all things on you; and when thus you believe, you have it: Or, it is a cordial assent, and particular application of the promises, giving CHRIST and all

his benefits. Give but a particular and cordial assent to the Gospel, and that is believing; and he never heard the Gospel, to whom it spoke not this. (6.) True humiliation doth not consist in legal terrors, nor yet in the continuance of terrors; else the damned should be most humbled: Rather in a conviction of the want of all things, raising a dissatisfaction with the present condition, and a despair of self, and a justifying of God in all matters. Yea, the truest preparations for CHRIST are a sense and conviction of vileness, and guiltiness, deadness, hardness, and blindness, and a weariedness with the world, and duties, and the evil heart. (7.) Though all be humbled, all are not alike humbled; so, though all believers be drawn to CHRIST and united to him, yet are not all drawn in the same manner to CHRIST: To some heaven as it were is opened, the LORD revealing the glory of JESUS to them, so as they leave all in a moment, and come flying to him; the soul is so overpowered, that it cannot but cleave to the LORD JESUS. There are others that are under deep horrors, and brought down to hell, and distracted with terrors; and CHRIST is lovely as One that saves from wrath and hell. Necessity makes them flee to the City of Refuge. Some under the sense of a dead, blind, empty heart, flee to him for life and eye-salve more expressly. Some find they cannot come; they desire the LORD to bring them. Some by the sense of a command desperately venture, and their faith is an act of wilfulness. (*Job* xiii. 15.) Some come to CHRIST, and they hang, (having his promise, "That whosoever comes, he will in no wise cast off,") by expectation, hope, and desire, until a greater window be opened in heaven; and then they clearly receive CHRIST, when the LORD JESUS is given, so as the everlasting doors are opened. Some close with CHRIST by way of marriage-consent and contract, CHRIST overcoming the heart by love. (8.) The soul, in believing, closes with the person of CHRIST, and closes with him only and for ever; to come to CHRIST for his benefits only, is not a personal love; to come to CHRIST, but not to him only, is an adulterous marriage; to come to

him for some time, and not for ever, is but to give CHRIST a visit, not to marry him. (9.) The whole life of a man is a continued conversion to GOD, in which he is perpetually humbled under a sense of sin, and draws nearer and nearer to GOD, with more fervent faith and love, and daily walks closer and closer with the LORD, endeavouring at perfection. (*Matt.* xviii. 3; *Luke* xxii. 32; *Prov.* xxiii. 26; *Cant.* iv. 8; *Psalms* lxiv. 7.) And GOD doth, as it were, act over and over again his work in the heart, forming his people more exactly than before; and therefore no wonder they meet with something like a second, yea, and a third and fourth conversion, especially where there are backslidings. (10.) The “kingdom of heaven,” either outward or inward, “cometh not with observation.” The foundations of the temple may be matter of mourning, and little glory seen therein; “the day of small things;” a great stream may proceed from a small fountain. The LORD comes not in the thunder nor earthquake, but in the “still voice.” We think, like NAAMAN, that when GOD comes to the heart, he will appear in visible glory: And sometimes He doth; yet at other times his voice is not heard in the streets, and he “groweth as a tender plant out of the dry ground,” and there is little beauty seen in him. What a poor beginning was all this of a life of faith!



CHAPTER IV.

Of my Progress, and Growth, and Establishment in the ways of GOD.

I CONTINUED in some peace for ten days' time, but had not the impressions of joy I had in the beginning so deep upon my spirit as at first. There came a cloud and overshadowed me thus:

1. I liked ease and rest; and now, when the LORD had broken my bonds and yoke, I thought there was no more

for me to do, I dreamed of no cloud or night; and since the main was secured, I did not apprehend such a necessity of labour, but would have been sleeping in my nest; or else, if I must needs pray and fight, I desired to be taken up into CHRIST's arms as I was at first, and to be passive, and CHRIST to do all. (*Hosea* xi. 3; *Psalms* xxx. 6.) I said, (like PETER,) "It is good to be here," and "Let us make a tabernacle," until a cloud overshadowed me, which, when it did, I expected in vain CHRIST's return in the same manner. Then not finding peace nor rest in God, because I would not dig for it, I strove to have it from the world, and therefore turned slothful, and for some time followed vanities, seeking rest, until (reproved) I went to prayer, but got no good. I took up *Shepherd's Sound Believer*, and there read this question, 'How shall I know whether my whole soul hath come to CHRIST?' He answers, 'When CHRIST alone gives sufficient satisfaction, so as there is no need of idols and lusts.' 'Ah!' said I, 'I do not thus; for my heart runs out continually after idols.' 'How couldest thou think,' said Conscience, 'that wast so dead, to close with CHRIST with the whole soul? Have not the effects discovered thy unsoundness and hypocrisy? See to the whorishness and adulteries of thy heart, and by that judge of thy love in marrying CHRIST. Doth not thy unsteadiness in his covenant prove, that thy heart was not right with God at first, and that thou liedst unto him when thou closedst with him as the Rock of thy Salvation?' Upon this I concluded, that all my life-time I was in a delusion, which made the sky very black. This temptation was so violent there was no resisting it, whereby my heart became sorrowful, strengthless, and discouraged. O! what shall I, nay what can I do now? Can I bestow more pains than I did? To have known before, while I suspected no less, that I was wrong, would not so have shaken me; as, after some assurance of favour, to be cast down to hell; heart and hand were taken away from me; I did not reason the matter, but yielded easily and quickly. Now were my foundations shaken, and a breach made as

to my interest in God, and in the grounds which the LORD had made me lay : A whole sea followed. But this was not enough : SATAN was let out upon me, to trouble me with atheistical thoughts, which had like serpents been hissing, and had appeared, but were quieted, though not killed ; a certain token that they would, when occasion offered, break out most violently. ‘ Oh ! ’ said I, ‘ what a delusion have I been in ! I was never convinced nor humbled, nay, I think, never convinced that there was a God, or that his word was true.’

Now the LORD leaving me, and being naturally melancholy, atheistical temptations were driven most violently upon me, upon which great and sensible horror fell upon my spirit ; which arose, not so much from the thoughts of this that there was no God, as from the thoughts that myself was an Atheist, and that I had not a demonstrative argument for proving effectually that there is a God. O ! miserable creature, cried I, that perished not when under horror, before I had known any thing of God ! but to live till now, till I had contracted more guilt and punishment ! O happy when I thought I had sinned the sin against the HOLY GHOST ! For then there were hopes, that while I believed the Scriptures, by them I might be persuaded that I had not sinned it ; but now no remedy is left : When the foundations are loosed, what means can I use ? To whom shall I go, when I doubt the being of God ? How shall I be convinced ? How shall I pray ?

Looking to the remedilessness of my condition, and the sadness of this Providence, my melancholy thoughts, of which SATAN made his use, represented God as terrible to me, as One who had been watching all my life-time to do me evil, and that was now manifesting that hid displeasure against me which he bore me this long time. I thought, or apprehended, God’s wrath was more at my person than faults ; in a word, God was fearful to me, so that I was all taken to pieces and disjointed.

This fire made the scum and filth of rebellion, and that hatred that was in my heart against God, appear : My

natural corruptions were stirred more violently than ever; the reading of Scripture and prayer had no taste, nay, these means were terrible to me. O how happy was it (said I) when under my first terrors, to what I am at this time! While terrors formerly were upon me, I could delight in prayer and other means, which were exceeding sweet unto me; but now, alas! duties are a burden, a wearisomeness and terror unto me, and occasionally increase my trouble: For, whenever I read Scripture, a thousand atheistical thoughts are injected; and therefore my case is most hopeless. Now the LORD loves me not, and my soul abhors him; my heart is so wicked, that though with SPIRA I say it not with my tongue, yet wish I that there were no God; he is strange and terrible unto me, an enemy, and therefore hateful to me. Then did I find that the carnal mind is enmity against God; I was a right representation of the damned in hell, tormented and hopeless, and raging against God and his Providence. Sometimes I would say, 'What a strange thing is this! thou thinkest there is no God, and yet art afraid of him.'

It did not a little heighten my sorrows, that I was within fourteen days to partake of the Sacrament: The condition I was in, and the want of the evidences of grace, made me look on communicating as a dreadful business; and the pride of my heart was such, that having been known to have resolved to communicate, it would be thought a weakness not to communicate: And for this cause I was the more diligent to get oil, and to get my wedding garment on; but found not such returns as upon the like occasions I had hitherto found, partly through sloth and partly through the pride of my heart; so that I was, on the Sabbath-day morning that I was to communicate, in as sad a taking as I was ever before, utterly jumbled, and at a distance with God, and full of horror and atheistical temptations.

It is true, that for some time it pleased GOD to suspend these storms, and to give a calm, by binding up SATAN for a time; and it continued thus until three days before

my communicating. I wondered how they could be removed, when the cause was not taken away; and therefore they came again when I came to the table. Then would I say to myself, O poor wretched soul, thou hast oftentimes desired a conviction and a law-work, and now thou hast one to the purpose; see what good it doth thee: O how unkindly and diabolical are these convictions! The occasion and ground of my trouble were atheistical suggestions, and hard thoughts of God; likewise it afflicted me, that I could not get rid of all sin, and that I could not be resolved to do all duties, especially the duty of reproof, to which I was averse through my natural bashfulness.

My trouble was increased by my communicating; especially, by conversing with others, I found that the LORD that day had been distributing largely; and it was ordinary with them to express themselves thus, ‘I have found Him.’ O, said I, and am I only a bastard? Hath He given to every one his portion, and famished me? This struck me dead, and I was no longer for company: The more spiritual sermons were, and societies were, the more was I troubled; I saw as it were them coming from the East and the West, and sitting with ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, and myself among those that were thrust out: Meat, company, and all ordinances were a burden to me; I sat alone, and mine eyes were heavy with sorrow. O, said I, for some wilderness, that I might lament it, and pour out this miserable soul of mine in the LORD’s bosom! My hopes were gone, and I said, Farewell, all pleasant days! Henceforth I am entering the gloomy valley and shadow of death. No means would do me good: I looked over MR. BAXTER’S *Arguments for the Truth of the Scriptures*, but they seemed as straw to me, and my distempered spirit brake through them: All I could say or hear seemed but weak, either to persuade me, or to give me peace.

After the Sacrament my terrors increased, and my temptations assaulted me so violently, that I was taken off my knees, and could not pray one word: nay, they were so

violent, and my fears so strong, that I judged they could not be removed but by a miracle: And I would (said I) seek no other evidence of a Divine power and being, than the removing these fears; and I thought, if the LORD would condescend to this, I should doubt no more. Then was it suggested to me, Thy heart was once so secure, so careless, that it needed an Almighty power to awaken thee, as now thou art; and cannot the LORD, who hath wounded thy deemed impenetrable heart, heal it again?

2. This was my condition; and the LORD was delivering, and did deliver me by these steps and means. (1.) I was put continually to seek the LORD in the use of means, notwithstanding all my discouragements: I prayed, read, and meditated; and some healing I would find in these, but a cloud still came; however they did good insensibly. (2.) Being in the house of MR. T. H., a godly and prudent man, his company did me much good, especially his discourses to me concerning the nature of temptations, and how the Devil beats them violently into the soul without reason, and throws them in as it were, and presses by bold assertions on the soul what he would have it believe: Likewise his prayers did me good, especially when he spake of GOD's condescension, and man's stubbornness; and cited EPHRAIM, whom GOD smote, "And he went on frowardly in his ways; I have seen him, and will heal him:" As likewise, the marvellous light he gave to Scriptures, and manifested a depth in them that I never perceived before; which astonished me, and made me see something evidencing a Godhead even in them, a wonderful excellency hid in them. Lastly, his cheerful conversation, not in a carnal way, but his joy was inward, proceeding from faith in GOD: For the universal carnality of professors, with their discouragements, living so short of their principles, did much help forward my Atheism, as it made me think that a Saint was but a fancy; but truly mine eyes saw something of a New-Testament spirit in him, and was some way persuaded, by seeing his holiness, his cheerfulness in GOD, and his deep reach in spiritual mysteries, that there was a GOD, and a

holiness attainable. And such was the power of God in him, that with his seasonable discourse and prayer, he would charm, and calm, and quiet my storms, even when I despaired of help, and thought it impossible; though they would return again when I was gone from him. (3.) When I came from that Minister's house, my atheistical thoughts recurred and assaulted me in such a manner that my soul was vexed unto death. I could bear it no longer, and through the violence of temptations was taken off my knees, and unable so much as to knit four sentences together. I at last sat down on my knees, and said to this purpose; 'LORD, if thou BE, thou art Almighty, and canst reveal so much of Thyself as may convince me and put away this storm; I desire thee therefore to give this proof of thy Power and Being, as this night to put away this storm, and convince me there is a God, and that thy Word is true. LORD, be not offended with my peremptoriness, for I can bear no longer; and besides, if thou delay the revelation of thy mind herein, my suspicious heart will be ready to say, that it was time that I altered my condition; and, if this very night thou do, I will look upon it as a sufficient demonstration of thy Being. Determine thou the way thyself; I have opened my mouth. LORD, bow the heavens, and give not by the continuance of my trouble such a ground of cavil to the adversary against me, to make me doubt thou art the hearer of prayer.' Immediately it was suggested, Now hold by thy word, and thou shalt see God will not help thee this night, and let this increase thy suspicions; for sure, if there were a God, He would help when so put to it. But the LORD did bow the heavens: For, sitting pensively at the fire-side, meditating on some rational arguments for the verity of the Scriptures, and not finding any but such as might be shifted; at last it was suggested, What a fool hast thou been! Art thou an Atheist, because thou canst not prove there is a God? Or, is there no God, because thou canst not demonstratively prove it? Suppose it possible that a number of honest men might lie, and that the world were

so mad as to believe them, and that this lie had been carried so secretly on as never to be discovered, and all evidences to the contrary burned when the world universally turned Christians; though this were possible, is it therefore true? Have ye ever seen an argument to prove there is no God, or that the Scriptures are false? But grant that the Scriptures are true; what evidences could ye have of their truth that ye have not? The doctrine itself is contrary to flesh and blood, against lying and juggling, confirmed by miracles, done before the world, and amidst enemies; for a long time copies in many thousand hands in different countries and kingdoms, delivered by the most holy, ingenuous, and faithful men, and not contradicted by enemies: Suppose, I say, all this course had been taken as the greatest evidence of its truth, would there not still be place for such objections as these? What more evidence would you have than this? Doth it follow, because such shifts may be given, that therefore the doctrine is not true? Might not all thy answers thou givest be given against it, though undoubtedly true? There appeared such an evidence in this reasoning, the LORD shining upon it, that by the almighty power of CHRIST my clouds did fly away; the bands in which I had been holden, did in an instant break asunder, all my fears vanished, and there was a calm: In which God did show much goodness, and power, and condescension, who looked so seasonably upon me.

3. From which I learn, (1.) As the Devil seems to undermine men in their strongest bulwarks, so must the LORD with a strong hand convince of, and teach fundamental principles, and amongst the rest persuade that there is a God. Natural belief and evidence vanish in supernaturals. (2.) No natural or rational evidence is sufficient to convince of Atheism; for all that either I could meditate or read in books, could not cure my Atheism. Peace is a created thing of God. (3.) CHRIST outshoots SATAN in his own bow: The Devil sought by these temptations to shake me loose of all my principles; and God blessed it to be the means of my establishing. (4.) An evil under

which the soul mourns, is burdened, and which it loathes, will never destroy a man ; it is ill entertained that destroy the soul. (5.) While we are here, we must resolve to meet with one evil after another to grapple with : Here is not the land of rest : “ In the world ye shall have tribulation,” either inward or outward, or both. I had no sooner come out of the wilderness, and was thinking to “ multiply my days as the sand,” in peace, but this storm came. (6.) God afflicts in measures, he puts no more weight upon the soul than it is able to bear ; I had little or no outward afflictions to grapple with ; now the LORD “ stayed his east wind in the day of his rough wind ;” (*Isa. xxvii. 8 ;*) the foundations of the great deep, which afterwards broke out, were not yet opened. (7.) Violent temptations last not long ; when the Devil turns violent, his best arrows are done. (8.) A saint’s first exercises are ordinarily in spirituals, before he be set to conflict with outward troubles, that he be not turned carnal by them, but, being somewhat acquainted with the LORD’s ways, may be more spiritual in his outward exercises : The LORD trains him up privately, as it were, before he set him out to fight.

1. I was then to go to South, being in the year 1661, where I stayed from November, I think, till October after, being to pay some money to a creditor, and to transact with some debtors, being at this time twenty-one years of age ; as likewise some business did intervene there which took me up. It was now that I began some way to mind business ; I should have gone to the College, but I was otherwise taken up : In a word, except it was to spend my time, I knew no good I did all that time ; only I wrote some law. I came home at last, and was a little more taken up in duty when at home, but made no sensible progress.

2. About this time my outward afflictions began to appear, and the LORD was bringing me low as to my condition in the world, by means of a person who pretended right to all we had in the world, and had some colour of law

for it. He called me South, being cited for that effect ; where being come, and destitute of friends and money, the times being evil, and there being much corruption in courts, and my adversary being in great favour, and I unskilful in law, and withal conscious of the weakness of my securities, I was inclined to agree with him on what terms it pleased himself, giving him much of twelve thousand marks, which was the principal part of my interest. To the ignorant and unacquainted with my affairs, this exposed me to much contempt. About the same time likewise I was unadvisedly bound for the sum of eight thousand marks of portions to my sisters, they being to be married, and my mother renting all my estate, which was not now above one hundred pounds sterling per annum ; these sums daily ran on interest, and consumed my stock : And much of this I looked on as a punishment of my faults.

3. I continued in these sins, which about this time did mightily prevail against me ; (1.) I omitted the excellent and precious occasions of getting and doing good, both in reference to myself and others, in spirituals and temporals, where I had occasions of sermons, of fellowship of saints, of books, and otherwise accomplishing myself : (2.) There was much omission of private duties, of prayer, meditation, of reading the Scriptures ; these were either omitted, or very slightly performed. (3.) I lived in spiritual adulteries, and gave myself to idols, to sensuality of meats, drinks, company, pastime, cards and dice ; and, having “ forsaken God the Fountain of living waters, I hewed out to myself broken cisterns that can hold no water :” And in this life of pleasure I continued, notwithstanding many challenges of conscience. (4.) I through this decayed in grace, lost my assurance, peace and strength, and became very unhearty and indisposed. (5.) There was extraordinary lightness in my conversation, especially with professors, when the sad time called for mourning. The work of reformation was at this time ruined ; the eminent servants of CHRIST, some killed, some banished, their livelihood taken from them, and all generally discountenanced ;

wickedness advanced, and godliness was borne down ; faithful Ministers were cast from their charges ; and yet was I making mirth when mine eyes were witnesses to all this.

4. Yet notwithstanding some life continued still, and the burning bush was not consumed. The means that did me good were, (1.) I prayed once a day, at least in the morning ; and this kept me from putrefying altogether. (2.) On the Sabbath-day I took some more time, and the LORD ordinarily met me with some life and affections ; and then I saw the evil of my ways. (3.) When sin and distance from God came to some height, I retired, and poured out my soul to God, and by this means got good, and put on new resolutions. (4.) Afflictions began likewise to work, and kept my eyes waking, put me to prayer, and made mercies, whether spiritual or temporal, sweet to me. (5.) Some seasonable words I heard sometimes in good books, or sermons, or discourses, which kept in my dying life ; and through this it came to pass, that though I was much endangered by temptations, yet not altogether destroyed.

5. From which I observe, (1.) The great power of sin that is in the heart, that, notwithstanding all means, is apt to break out again. O how great need of watchfulness is there, and spiritual dependence on God ! (2.) Prosperity, ease, and the desires of the soul, send leanness to the soul ; the evils of the world are much better than the good thereof. It is better with me when I have least outward comforts. (3.) Whatever God suffers for a time, He will not suffer sin unpunished. Though God be merciful, gracious and long-suffering, yet by no means will He clear the guilty. Justice and mercy kiss one another ; for about this same time my outward afflictions did begin, and the seeds of my future afflictions were sown. (4.) Prayer and meditation, though not always effectual for the end intended, yet are evermore profitable ; for though they did not altogether recover me, yet they did preserve me from utter falling : And so by experience I know the truth of this, “ He hath not said to the house of JACOB, seek his face in vain.” For, ever since I remember, proportionable to my diligence in

seeking was my finding; nor made I ever any extraordinary aim at God, but I found something extraordinary. (5.) I learn a Christian's assurance or faith, though it do not first flow from holiness, yet is ever proportionable to his holy walking. Faith is kept in a pure conscience; sin is like a blot of ink fallen upon our evidences. This I found as a truth, and so will any not given up to the delusion of Antinomianism. Being thus kept for a while in bonds, and not able to recover, I came home, and the LORD looked upon me thus.

1. Being come home, and exceedingly afflicted with the remembrance of mis-spent time, and the cloud that was upon the breaking out in outward troubles, I resolved, seeing my case was extraordinary, and that fasting had been so blessed to me, I would try what the LORD would now do to me by it. The causes were my unsettledness and low condition. I gave up myself to God, to be directed by Him, and He led me by an unexpected way, which was by convincing me of my unbelief, and humbling me under it, and drawing me by renewed acts of faith to himself again. The LORD made the strain of my discourse to run out on faith, and unbelief, which last I considered as the greatest of evils.

With this consideration, which God did press home upon my soul, through his goodness and power, I was wrought on so powerfully and sweetly to believe the sinfulness of unbelief; and the LORD commended faith so to me, that I was drawn to CHRIST by an irresistible power.

From this there proceeded a new heart, resolution and strength: All sorrows and fears were removed, and I was much comforted, and strengthened: I was strengthened to seek the LORD and his ways. Sin in general was mortified, and a particular sin, namely, playing at cards, quite felled, with which I had so long wrestled in vain, and to which I had so great an inclination that I continued in it against checks of conscience: That sin this day received its death's wound; I put on a thorough resolution never to use any of these

games, and this so effectually, that from that day to this, I never had so much as an inclination to it.

2. Nor were the immediate effects of this, while at home, less blessed: For, (1.) I found a greater wisdom, strength and activity to go about civil business, which I could master now. (2.) I had experience of the LORD's kindness in some afflictions and trials I met with at the same time, in supporting my spirit under them, and delivering my soul out of them wonderfully by his own immediate power; which if God had not done, any of them might do much to break me: These did not in the least dismay me. (3.) I found afflictions doing me good; and the rod was giving me instruction, and putting me to prayer in an extraordinary manner: My heart likewise was mortified to the world, and God was made sweet to me as my portion. (4.) I began again to write diaries, and to walk more closely and circumspect with God. The Scriptures were sweet to me, and I began to see and feel more light, and power, and wisdom in them than before, especially the Epistle to the Romans. (5.) Hence I learned, that days and times set apart extraordinarily, on some extraordinary occasions, are exceeding useful and profitable (if not needful) to the preservation of a Christian life; nor know I how folks can be Christians without it. There were occasional sacrifices as well as the daily burnt-offering, and days and times extraordinarily for extraordinary occasions: It is true, they are not stinted now under the Gospel; but there is this moral in them, that yet obliges, That extraordinary mercies or troubles should have proportional extraordinary worship and address to God. For my own part, I cannot express how needful, yea, how profitable, and necessary these days have been: And I look on the neglect of extraordinary address to God, as one main cause why there are so many decayed Christians.

4. Being delivered now from all my fears, and my day clearing as to my spiritual condition, and better hopes of temporal affairs, I was anew plunged in a sea of troubles,

when I did scarce dream of it : For falling out with some of my relations unadvisedly, I pursued them at law, and spent more on it than the matter was worth : Where there wanted not diligence and success as to my part, but God put visible hinderances in the way, and I was led merely by my inclinations, and did not advise with the LORD.

At first, through want of occasions to pray, and manifold temptations, and want of good company, and much distraction with what I intended, I fell into some considerable decay, and began to be remiss in my progress, and to grow dead and dull, and untender, and the LORD's communications did dry up upon my soul ; and now I began to forget former things : And this continued in July, and August. I then changed my quarters in town, being unsatisfied with my former, and the inconvenience thereof ; and took up my chamber in a godly man's house, a Minister, where, through his conversation, and some more pains taken in duties, and his spiritual sermons on the Sabbath-day, but especially through the LORD's pouring out of his SPIRIT, and drawing near to my soul, I began again to recover ; and in process of time not only recovered what I lost, but much more : The unregarded vineyard was now looked to again, and communion with God set on foot, and my taste of spiritual truths returned. Here I stayed till the middle of October.

One Sabbath-day especially, when alone, at first perceiving nothing, and under great deadness, and upon the point of giving over, the LORD was pleased unexpectedly to draw near, and to concur so with my exercises, that, through the light of his SPIRIT, I beheld the work of God in my soul ; I discovered the many mistakes I had, that before kept me in darkness and bondage ; through which I was so enlightened and strengthened that it was a recovery of health after sickness ; in the strength of which I went afterwards, and by this day's exercise did much advance in my journey : And the truths of the LORD then taught me, were of especial use ever afterwards to me.

I here likewise got some very extraordinary visits from

the LORD both in prayer and other exercises, especially in reading the Scriptures: But it was pressed on my spirit, and I was followed with it, that bonds and afflictions were abiding me.

5. And now being a little strengthened, and looking for good days, a cloud came and darkened my sky; for a grievous storm of outward afflictions broke out, which increased and drew my afflictions to a head: The steps of which were these, (1.) The great law-business for which I came South, was at once cast; by which means my reputation was lost; as likewise all my preparations against some debtors made void, and I looked on this as no less than the loss of twenty thousand pounds. (2.) I lost through my absence from the North, eight hundred marks per annum, which were now recovered by the creditors; this afterwards I strove to regain, but in vain, so that I lived on my mother's bounty. (3.) To help this, other two hundred marks per annum were taken from me about the same time, through want of money to defend it and bad securities. (4.) Nor was this enough: After I came home I was charged before two Courts at one time, most violently, for no less than twelve thousand marks alleged due by my father; which kept me continually travelling, and put me to great charges to maintain these two actions. (5.) There were likewise some debts which I owed here and there, extending in all to one thousand pounds, for which I was daily harassed by several persons; so that South, North, East, and West, I could not turn me where I had not a creditor: Which I confess troubled me more than all the rest, as having my credit engaged therein; and that which I had ordered to pay them was taken away, nor knew I what to do. (6.) Nothing now remained of all my father's fortune, but a small estate, enjoyed by my mother for her life: And about the same time a new (though unjust) adversary charges both her and me for thirty-six thousand marks; so that our whole livelihood was either gone, or at stake: For four years did this adversary vex us, and was like to have undone us as to our temporal condition, had not the LORD

prevented (7.) To this were added contempt and reproach ; I was the table-talk of the times ; a sign and wonder ; the people of God were grieved ; my nearest and surest friends forsook and looked strange on me, of whose kindness now I had proof, and whom on purpose I tried, though I knew they would not help me ; I was as a burden to them, and by them despised : And whoever had any thing to say, did now strike in against me. To complete all, there was no returning to Him that smote me, I decayed in my spiritual condition : From October to January 1665, all things were low both spiritually and temporally.

6. The causes of these my troubles were either outward, or from myself. The outward causes were, (1.) My ancestors' bad securities in their heritages, which were questioned in my time. (2.) My father's being bound for others, which hath been forty-eight thousand marks out of my way. (3.) His dying so soon, and leaving me so young. (4.) The unskilfulness and negligence of those whom he intrusted with the management thereof ; for nothing was looked to after he was gone, and all was destroyed before I was twenty years of age. (5.) Evil friends, some slighting and denying us help ; others out of envy to my father, employing all their power to harm us. (6.) Evil times, so that I durst scarce appear to do any thing, being hated for my principles.

The cause inward from myself was sin ; as, (1.) I suppose my relations' sins had influence on this storm ; for I found great freedom in confessing them. (2.) We were a professing family, and did not walk suitably thereunto, but like the world. (3.) My desires to be great with men ; and my too much esteeming, prizing and desiring of outward greatness and comforts. (4.) Not acknowledging God in all our ways, but doing things without his advice, and running to this or the other outward help. (5.) Pride and stoutness of heart, which God hath been crushing. (6.) Incurribleness under ordinances, convictions and lesser judgments ; therefore did the LORD take the rod. I found much good by all these dispensations ; for by the

sadness of the countenance I find my heart bettered and mortified to the world, and I drawn nearer to God, and kept waking, in the experience of the LORD's goodness. In a word, the LORD hath so blessed his rod to me, that I find the fruits of righteousness wrought in me, so as I may say, I had perished, unless I had perished: Blessed be the LORD for inward and outward exercises and troubles.

7. Being in this forsaken and desolate case, and none to pity, it pleased the LORD to look upon me, and to give my soul a resting place, when forsaken of all others; he was the only Friend in adversity. He strengthened my soul by comfortable words, allaying thereby the extremity of my afflictions; then did He say unto me, "Why art thou disquieted?" Is there any thing but what is ordinary befallen thee? Are there not many thousands that would change conditions with thee? Thou hast much of CHRIST's compassion, and pity, and tenderness; it may be He will do thee good for this: It is good, that this is the vengeance He takes for all that thou hast done: "Chastened of the LORD, that thou mayest not be condemned with the world." Poor soul, what hast thou lost? Thy loss hath been only the things of the world, in which no part of thy happiness doth consist: Art thou not in thy FATHER's hand? And will not thy Tutor order all things well? Men and Devils can do no more than He permits; and dost thou fear evil from that side? Shouldest thou not bear all that comes from Him? But consider further, wouldest thou yet exchange states with the mad world? All thy adversaries, in all likelihood, that are now making merry, will burn in hell for ever: Is thy misery any thing to these? Wait therefore upon God: A little time will blow over this storm; it cannot last long. And though thy case be sad, yet it is not beyond God's power; yea, thou shalt bless the day that ever thou wast afflicted: Afflictions are good things, else had they never been in legacy by CHRIST, nor promised in the new Covenant. With these and the like considerations was my soul several times, in my extremity, refreshed and allayed. And I would get much ease sometimes by

pouring out of my soul to God in prayer, and showing him my case; quickly did the LORD reward me outwardly. My adversaries wearied with delays, and their commission at the same time taken away, gave over the pursuit, and never further troubled me till this day.

8. At the same time I was growing in my spiritual condition, increasing in faith, in diligence and strength; the Scriptures were very sweet, occasions of meeting with God seldom in vain; this I had to counterbalance my outward troubles; so that, as the LORD did bear down with one hand, he supported with the other. One time I was strongly enlightened in the mystery of the Trinity; another time, I was so taken up with the thoughts of the love of CHRIST, that I awaked the whole Winter-night, admiring CHRIST, and praying with suitable affection; at other times I spent two or three hours in prayer: Likewise at the same time, writing on the Scriptures, I received much light, clearness and sweetness. Several extraordinary visits would the LORD bestow on me; remembering my afflictions, by which I would oftentimes be carried above the world.

9. When we came home again, the LORD was no less kind to me, yea, exceeded; and I was daily admitted to nearer and nearer fellowship with himself: And, wherever I was, God was with me; and continued thus till October.

(1.) About this time, I did begin to study the covenant of grace: And one time, from *Rom. v.*, and from the consideration of Baptism, was I mightily strengthened in assurance and confidence, and “the joy of the LORD” did I find to be “my strength.” (2.) Another time, setting some time apart for examining my condition, though at first I was very indisposed, yet I was so enlightened and refreshed, that in the strength thereof I walked many days. (3.) I discovered a marvellous depth in the covenant of grace; I was much enlightened and strengthened in the extent, freedom and excellency thereof: The LORD one night began to apply this very strongly and clearly: It was “a night to be much remembered” for ever. The LORD did so clear the covenant of grace, and by his SPIRIT made me (at first

dull and weak) apply and consent, and feed upon these privileges as mine. Are all these things yours? quoth the SPIRIT; why dost thou not feed upon them? Why dost thou not “delight thyself in fatness?” Thou complainest of the want of life, strength and comfort, why dost thou not come to the fire, that thou mayest be warm? Here is the LORD’s security for what thou wantest: If thou had thy friend’s security for money, thou wouldest be glad; and hast thou not the LORD’s in thy Bible? And may not heaven, CHRIST and holiness satisfy thee? And with this there came such a mighty gale of the SPIRIT, that took away all my confusions, made my soul apply CHRIST and all his benefits, answered all my objections fully and clearly, and made me strongly apply the promises; insomuch that I found CHRIST a sweet and satisfying thing; I found his flesh “meat indeed,” and his blood “drink indeed;” all fears were driven away; the Gospel-privileges appeared exceeding sweet, so that I spent the whole night in prayer and praising and rejoicing; wishing now for the morning, that I might do mightily for the LORD: My very body was weakened with the abundance of the joy of faith, arising from a sense of an interest in God. I was likewise very evangelical in my actings, considering all actions as the LORD’s service, and myself and all things the LORD’s; walking in great peace, and glorifying God, endeavouring to encourage others.

10. There followed upon this a certain decay during the space of a year; this was about the end of 1664, and continued till the end of 1665, during which time I was usually, though not always, at home. This decay was but from that height of spiritual joy, and degrees in communion with God; there were more temptations, less peace within, and less progress made in the ways of God; so that I accounted the year 1665 an unfortunate year: All this time there was diligence in duties, and some visits, quickenings and encouragements, and yet below what I formerly received; visitations were neither so great, nor the impressions so lasting: The causes of which were, (1.) My going

from home, where I had freedom from trouble, much company and comforts to take up my heart. (2.) Sensuality when from home, and little minding of God. (3.) Pride in despising of others, and thinking too much of myself and of my attainments, and something of a supercilious carriage. (4.) Evil company, and going to places where I had no call, which did much prejudice.

11. But God, after many days visited me, so as I not only recovered my former health, but set further forward than ever I was, thus, (1.) I received much strength from some private fasts I kept, never using that duty in vain. (2.) About the same time I had frequent occasion of converse with godly, able and exercised Christians, by which many meetings were kept, and therein something of God, whereby I was much bettered: Though in the mean time I found not the sensible effects of these occasions, yet did they me good insensibly. (3.) I went to ———, being helped with extraordinary prayer before, and there was assisted to encourage others and exhort, and was helped to shine in a gospel-conversation. And here I set up one other sail; for before I prayed but twice a day, I here resolved to set some time apart at mid-day for this effect; and, obeying this, I found the effects to be wonderful. My heart was never in a better frame; never more assurance and singleness of heart; never more strength to do or suffer for God; never more mortification to the world, and sweetness in the ways of God: And now I was fully resolved, always, and in all places, to glorify Him. All this time outward troubles and wants continued, though the burden and weight of this serpent were abated; God stayed his rough wind; they lay on, but did neither increase nor trouble.

Meantime I was smitten in my body with a painful bile, with which I had been threatened some years before; which, with the pain thereof, did at first cast me into a fever, and my breath was stopped by the oppression of the spirits; which made me have some impressions of death. During that time, SATAN was let out again, and was most violent

in his temptations ; and my heart was so cast down, that one afternoon, there was such faintness, weakness and aversion to duty, that I thought I should never endure it, and was not far from casting it off altogether ; but God pitied the anguish of my soul, and did break these spiritual bonds. During this sickness He miraculously allayed the pain of my bile, and speedily, and that without means, cured it ; for however I bought some things to prevent it, yet, looking on it as a punishment from God, I knew not if I could be free to take the rod out of his hand, and to counterwork Him. And indeed I lost nothing by this ; for, giving my cheeks to this Smiter, my chastisement was very gentle and of short continuance, so I was helped to continue in duties ; and, when the bile brake, I resolved to go more mightily, and diligently about the LORD's work than ever. The Summer after, on a Sabbath-day, " I called to mind the days of old," and some of the LORD's ways with me, which opened the doors of my soul, and love quickened in longing after, and grieving for his absence, and for my ways ; which disposition continued and strengthened me. There I was put to learn a new exercise, which was, to observe Providences, and to consider the ends of God's particular and general Providences, the ends of afflictions, of sins, of backslidings, of indispositions, and to remark some steps of love in them, which did me much good. He let me see much love in all dispensations, enlightened me in my duties, kept me from wrong constructions, and did much establish and comfort me. Being to quit our chief dwellings and lands, according to my transaction three years ago, and some mistakes falling out, I stayed alone, and went to another contiguous shire, where were some lively Christians and my very dear friends, with whom I spent time profitably, building up one another. There I resolved to set up extraordinary days of humiliation again, and so effectually, that a glory was seen in the ways of God and of his people which I saw not before, and love to CHRIST advanced. After I came home I set up humiliation-days, and made it my exercise to conflict with and

overcome the world, to close fully and wholly with CHRIST, to glorify Him with all my heart, and Him only. The Winter after, I found my heart warm to CHRIST, through rubbing over in my memory some steps of the LORD'S Providences and dealings towards me: And there my eyes were opened to see an infinite fountain of consolation and love, which before was hid to me; there I remembered all the pains the LORD took in preparing me for Himself, how much He suffered at my hands, all the care He had of me in my wilderness-condition, how He humbled me, convinced me, and how many times his visitation upheld my spirit: Then did I see love in all the LORD'S dealing with me, God in all this pursuing me constantly with loving-kindness. About the same time likewise I was convinced of the great sin of unthankfulness, the evil and sinfulness of which was discovered, and desires to abound in this grace of thankfulness; which was thus occasioned: I found some others that had outgone me far in love and gratitude, speaking much of CHRIST'S love and kindness to them, and what they were meeting with, and how much they made of small visits: O ungrateful wretch (said I to myself) thou art often meeting with quickening consolations and visitations, by which thy dying life is preserved, and yet takest no notice of it: Not one thankful acknowledgment for all this, nor one loving word spoken in commendation of CHRIST for all this: The breathings and gifts of GOD'S SPIRIT, and these, in respect they are from Him, are to be infinitely prized; yea, they are the purchase of CHRIST'S blood, and a pledge and testimony of the LORD'S kindness, and the least of favours and tokens from a Prince are highly valued. And this did help me to thankfulness, and I did set a value upon mercies. I was at this time pressed vehemently to close walking; to an entire, cordial and full resignation of myself to GOD; to keep distance with the world; to be for the LORD and Him only, and for none other; and was made sensible of one point of loose walking, that I did not endeavour to observe the LORD'S Providences, and that I did not walk in his counsel, and depend on Him, acknowledging

Him in all my ways : I began a little afterwards to study patience ; I got this lesson in my hand, and made some small progress therein : Patience I took up under the notion of the soul's invincible going on in duties, notwithstanding all evils ; when a man keeps his place and ground, and stands out like a rock, not amazed with any amazement, not discouraged, not fainting, not giving over, but continuing in a constant frame of spirit. What I sought not I learned, and what I sought I got not : God answered my prayers though not in my way, and showed He accepted them ; He led me in his way to heaven, and not in mine. At last, that the warning I got five years since in the South might be fulfilled, of the bonds and afflictions that were abiding me, I was arrested for a debt which I had paid. Only my trustee and near relation, who received the money from me to be given to my creditor, did knavishly apply it to his own use ; for which, I was taken and kept three days in a chamber, till course was taken with it ; which occasioned my going South, where I continued much of two years, sometimes in the South, and sometimes in the North. My condition during this time was a wrestling condition with the sons of ZERUIAH that were too strong for me ; little or no over-coming, yet violent wrestling. Yet some work was done ; the LORD blessed my fellowship to the South-country professors, that several of them were awakened ; and generally my conversation was edifying, and someway shining, so that I received much honour thereby ; while I honoured God, the LORD honoured me. I kept Christian fellowship with them, prayed with and exhorted them, which was not in vain, especially in Edinburgh, where I sometimes spake four times in a week. The scope of my discourses was exalting holiness ; against a slight work of grace ; against looseness and laxness ; against formality ; against sloth and unprofitableness ; and pressing them to be doing good ; against discouragements and unbelief, and pressing to believe.

4. Lastly. It pleased the LORD by degrees likewise to look favourably on my outward condition, and to deliver

me from my afflictions, and vexatious debts and wants, and now he hath in some measure exalted mine head, and given me by strange Providences, what he had taken from me : For I humbled myself under the sense of the calamities of our family, and my own particular wants. I besought him to keep us from utter destruction : And the LORD was pleased to hear. He destroyed by death my chief adversaries ; I found shifts to pay my many petty debts ; gained our law action ; and was restored to some of my ancient possessions again. Thus have I briefly run over the most memorable circumstances in my life until this time ; being now thirty years of age, and unmarried.



CHAPTER V.

Relating to some Things touching my present Condition.

SECT. 1. *Wherein are contained some general Observations in reference to myself.*

1. AFTER a long and serious search into my estate before GOD, I am, by the LORD's works of love towards me, and his works of grace in my soul, made to conclude that I am born again, and that there is not only a formal partial change wrought, but that I am visited with salvation : For I find a great and universal change wrought in my soul, growing rather than decaying ; so that thus I stand fixed as to this matter : I have both word and seal for it. (2.) Yet do I find this my belief of my interest much shaken and sore assaulted by sin, which falls like a blot upon all my evidences, and takes away the comfort of them, and fills me with some sudden apprehensions all may be wrong. (3.) I have thereupon concluded it to be my duty to be thankful, to draw near to GOD by faith ; and to search, by prayer, meditation, and reading, my estate more exactly ; to consider the nature of sanctification more

exactly, and ponder objections and grounds of doubting; to pray to the LORD daily to open my estate to me; to practise obedience, and go on in the exercise of faith, love, and humility, and other graces; to be marking Providences, and the LORD's carriage to my soul.

2. I find I am exceeding sinful, compassed with more than ordinary infirmities. Before conversion, I have been suffered to run out in more open acts of rebellion than others, and now I think I grieve the LORD more than any other. I have a harder, blinder, and more carnal heart; so that I conclude myself the least of Saints, not worthy to be called a Saint. Therefore I am called to humility and submission: To love the LORD beyond others, as having forgiven me most: To be more watchful against sin, having such a heart within, so ready to slip; and to walk in greater fear, and to be more diligent; and to depend most on the LORD JESUS, (as having least in myself,) to make up all my wants with his fulness.

3. I have a weak, complying, soft nature, contrary to my will and judgment. I bless God for a clear judgment and understanding, for I am much given to pry into the bottom of things; but my miserable soft nature yields to every thing, and this makes all duties that are attended with labour and boldness a great burden to me. I am judged by men clean contrary, to be rude and contrary to all men; but little know they the wrestling I have with my own heart, and what a torment I breed to myself when I do not comply with men. O how much need of Divine assistance! No less will do my turn. I have nature always to resist. I hereupon find a great resistance to all manner of duties; so that there is no duty I go about, but I find SATAN and the power of sin in me ready to resist me in it; and I get nothing easily done, but over a mountain of difficulties, heart, and Providences, and all crossing. What a mighty work, to pray, to meditate, to speak, or to do any thing! O sloth!

4. That which most in earth I desire is, to do great things for God, to suffer much for him, to be signal in

honouring of him, to finish my ministry. I condemn the world as dung, and all the world's kindness, though my nature will not suffer me to express it: "My spirit is willing," but herein I find "the flesh is weak." My unprofitableness and sinfulness are my greatest grief. I had rather be cast out of God's comfortable presence, (so as not to be hated of him,) than out of his service. I have been sometimes thinking, that if these times last, my heart will break, if I be continually shut up this way, and all the passages stopped of doing for the LORD.

SECT. 2. *Declaring some strong Evils under which I mourn, and against which I wrestle.*

I FIND it with me as with the Israelites, that there were some nations that they could not drive out: So I may say, that there are some strong evils that I cannot drive out, and which continually afflict me, and discourage me.

The first evil is, that distance the LORD keeps with me in prayer, in Providences, commands, threatenings, promises, mercies, judgments. I find little of God in them, so that I may say, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not the knowledge of the Holy One." O how little of him is known! I dare not deny but I see him darkly, whereby my soul longs for him, and mourns for his absence; but yet I see him not distinctly and clearly in his glory with the seeing of the eye by that marvellous light. O LORD, my blindness! O blessed Heaven, where we shall see God, not as in a mystery, "but know as we are known!" This calls for mourning and humiliation, and addressing to CHRIST to open the eyes of the blind; and for purity and holiness, for these "shall see God;" and for "following on to know the LORD" in his attributes, in his Son JESUS, in his word, and in his Providences, by observing them.

The second evil is, the low measure of God's love in my soul. I find not in God what doth abundantly satisfy. I meet not with that which is called "the Power of God." In a word, I am kept in a low condition. Sanctification,

light, life, and comfort, are but sparingly let out to me ; and in my fulness I cry, ‘ I want still.’ This is to humble me, and make me long for heaven ; though blessed be the LORD’s Name, I meet with something, yea, more than I deserve, or ever I have been thankful for ; nor did I ever kindle a fire to him for nought. I comfort myself with this, that I have the earnest, and that is but small in respect of the stock. That this world and time is a time of wants, and therefore the LORD’s people are a generation of Seekers ; that there is much in CHRIST, in the promise, and much to be let out in heaven.

The third evil is, security and slightness of spirit as to spiritual things. I am not so sensibly affected with the evil of sin and of a natural condition, as to wonder at God’s patience, to tremble for fear, and be smitten with compassion to others who are yet in their sins. O I am but in jest, and half sleeping and waking ; though I know that nothing lies nearer, nor am I more exercised with any thing, than with spiritual things. I see no help for this, but serious consideration of the great matters of the law, and continual prayers to God for awakening and seriousness, and less seriousness in worldly affairs, for these take away the heart.

The fourth evil. I find a want of the SPIRIT, of the power and demonstration of the SPIRIT, in praying, speaking, and exhorting ; that whereby men are mainly convinced, and whereby men see more in the LORD’s people than in others, whereby they are a terror and a wonder to others, so as they stand in awe of them ; that glory and majesty, whereby respect and reverence is procured, that whereby CHRIST’s Sermons were differenced from those of the Scribes and Pharisees ; “ He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes ; ” which is mentioned *Micah* iii. 8, “ I am full of power by the SPIRIT of the LORD, to declare to the house of JACOB their sin ; ” which I judge to be the beams of God’s majesty and SPIRIT of holiness breaking out and shining through his people, whereof they, their words and carriage, are in some mea-

sure partakers. But my foul garments are on ; and, alas ! “ I am lying among the pots.” Woe is me, the crown of glory and majesty is fallen off my head, and my words are weak and not mighty, whereby contempt is bred. No remedy for this but humility, self-loathing, and a studying to maintain fellowship with God, for this made MOSES’s face to shine ; to walk circumspectly, for “ a man’s wisdom maketh his face to shine ;” and to express holiness, and glorify God, and then the LORD will honour thee.

The fifth evil. I cannot get the lesson of patient waiting on God until the end of a trial is learned ; but, ordinarily, after I am set and engaged to wait, I turn impatient, and my heart goes astray and turns careless ; and then possibly, when this thread is broken, I set myself to duties : And then the LORD’s visiting of my spirit with new influences, is like SAMUEL’s coming to SAUL after he had sacrificed ; so I cannot say the LORD’s return hath been the fruit of my waiting. I think I never knew what it is to abide in a patient waiting on God in a night of absence till the morning, but unhappily give over my dependence, and interrupt my waiting by my carelessness, and taking comfort from some creature ; which, though it proceed not from a deliberate wilfulness, as his, (*1 Kings* vi. 33,) yet I do that really which he did advisedly : So that as yet I have not learned that uninterrupted waiting. So that when the LORD visits my soul with thoughts of my privileges, yet much of my comfort is impaired through the remembrance of my uneven carriage during the want of it ; whereby I am moved to think, that it is come accidentally, and not in love. It hath once comforted me to think, that though the mercy hath not come as a fruit of either my waiting or prayers, yet hath it come as a fruit of CHRIST’s prayers, and merits, and sufferings, and this hath satisfied me.

The sixth evil. I cannot apply particular mercies fully and clearly, so as to have a persuasion of such a mercy I am seeking for, though I gain some application of general promises, such as these, “ CHRIST came to save sinners ;”

“GOD sent not his SON to condemn the world;” “CHRIST came to seek and to save that which was lost;” which quiet my spirit. When I am reading particular promises, for removing such and such straits, and for giving such and such blessings, they do not comfort me more than in their general nature they show GOD’S goodness; and therefore I find not strength in them to plead for such a particular mercy, nor to persuade my mind of it that I shall obtain it; only they, in the general, quiet me: And hence I am not distrustful of my salvation, or of my happiness in the general; but whether I shall get such a particular mercy, or be delivered from such an evil. O to know what this means, which is in *John*! “We know that if we ask according to his will, he heareth us;” and “this confidence we have of him.”

The seventh evil. I cannot get above the fears of men, so as to break out in open defiance and arms against the world, but am kept in strong chains of fear and bashfulness to displease them. I cannot boldly reprove, exhort, or be free with many whom yet I know or strongly suspect to be in a sad condition, especially if they be great ones: And, when at any time I do any thing of this, it is with a great deal of reluctance, nay, greater than to lay my head down on the block; and I strike so sparingly when I lift my rod, that I scarce touch them, which comes from my complying and soft easy nature; insomuch, that my neglects of such duties have been matter of my greatest exercises. Yet I think I fear not so much their prejudice or outward loss, as to grieve and displease men.

The eighth evil. I can never attain to a watchful, self-diffident, and fearing frame, when I am enlarged; but, notwithstanding my multiplied falls, when I am got up again, I am, with PETER, persuaded that I will never be so as before; but will confidently promise to do this or that, and will not believe that any temptation will break this resolution; which confidence is not founded on the LORD, but comes from a presumptuous trust I have in myself. In a word, I cannot misbelieve my own heart,

nor be thoroughly persuaded of its weakness and deceitfulness. It is true, in great matters I am diffident of myself; but in small matters and resolutions, I go about them continually in my own strength, and ever come short of them.

The ninth evil. I can never carry rightly in public occasions, but am ever the worse for them; I meet with little of God, and see so little of him, and get so little grace exercised, and am so carnal while doing any civil business even to which I have a call, that, prepare my heart as I will before I go out, and watch never so carefully, I find my whole man poisoned, and myself worse, and I come home with a world of challenges, so that company and business are a terror to me. I never know what to do when out of my chamber; I have not yet known what it is to traffic Christianly, but have been carnal in my ends and carriage, forgotten God, drowned in worldly matters: O when shall I be spiritual in carnal actions; in eating, drinking, bargaining, doing all as God's work! And when shall I get and do good in public occasions?

The tenth evil. The promises of the Gospel, with Scripture consolations, quiet me in all my afflictions; yet do not so abundantly satisfy me, as to make me "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

The eleventh evil. I can never keep my resolutions, so as in my practice to walk perfectly with God, so as to walk in peace; but every day I have challenges, not for sins of mere infirmity, but for such sins as might be helped, and which by mere unwatchfulness I fall into; such as to continue long departing from God, entertaining vain thoughts, idle words, mis-spending time, excess in lawful comforts, sloth in private duties, doing things rashly, and such like, which are not of mere infirmity. To walk thus perfectly with God I cannot, but there hath ever been a breach. By what I can learn, I never kept my vows even when the matter was possible.

The twelfth evil. Above all, I find a great unwillingness to teach, exhort and do good to others, or to glorify God publicly; I cannot delight in this, nor go about this

in faith of a blessing, nor with success, nor earnestly ; but there is with me much constrained work, many occasions are slighted of going about it, and the heart itself dead and heartless, and untouched with the glory of God, or the good of the person, especially if unconverted.

SECT. 3. *Declaring my present Exercises.*

My life is a mystery to me ; what I purpose, that I do not : Though I have been little advanced in these fore-mentioned exercises ; yet hath the LORD been exercising me with some things beyond my design ; as,

1. I have been called to exercise the life of faith, to walk by it and not by sight ; in which, by the LORD's revelation of the Gospel, and from some consideration on 2. Cor. v. 7, I have been exercised, especially through temptations, which seek to make me misbelieve.

2. I have learned and some way exercised patience, which is a continued submission and quiet obedience, and the constancy of the spirit, in not being shaken or moved or diverted with evil ; and I have this lesson continually in my head, and therein have made some progress.

3. I am learning to read love in the greatest afflictions, plagues, and disappointments ; and to put good constructions on all God's dealings ; and when any thing comes, though never so cross, I first inquire, What love can I see in this ?

4. I am casting out and have cast out the bondwoman and her child out of my soul, I mean, the slavish spirit of fear, bringing in daily evangelical principles, so that now I find more faith and love in my actings.

5. I am studying sobriety in my affections and carriage, seeking after moderation, in not being much moved with any occurrence, studying always to be kept within bounds, and to be my own master.

6. I am taken up with observing Providences, especially in reference to myself, to see what God's ends may

be in them, why they are sent, and what is suitable duty ; but above all, to see God in them, in his wisdom, holiness and love.

7. I am enabled to study and exercise thankfulness ; the greatest help whereunto is, the consideration that all favours are from God, and so many pledges of heaven, and bought with the blood of CHRIST.

8. I am studying to know the glory of heaven, to be drawing all my consolations from this, and to be making it my treasure.

9. I am studying to make CHRIST my all, even “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” and in want of all, to live in, and on, and from Himself alone.

Lastly, I learn dependence on God in outward straits, to recommend all things to Him, to believe on Him for deliverance, to comfort myself from Him, waiting to observe his hand in supporting under and delivering from manifold troubles ; and from these experiences to increase in love and faith : And indeed I have found manifold experiences of late of outward deliverances ; so that my life hath been a continual coming in and out of troubles, and every trouble seemed a remediless one, till God freed me out of it.

SECT. 4. *Rules for ordering my Speech, Behaviour and Practice.*

THE LORD’S people walk by rule ; their life is fitly compared (*Heb.* xii. 1) to a race : And I have therefore thought upon some general rules to be observed as the foundation of all true religion.

1. *General Rules.*

RULE 1. Labour to know and find out wherein a man’s chief happiness doth consist : Have an end to follow ; till a man intend right, he can never have a right motion. Fix

the heart in the belief of this, that the enjoyment of God in CHRIST is our happiness; and make the heart to close with this.

Rule 2. It will much contribute to our motion in the way, to be armed with a strong and deliberate resolution to walk in such ways; this will determine us, “I have chosen thy precepts as mine heritage for ever. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will observe all thy righteous judgments.” (*Psalm* cxix. 106, 111.) Consider and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of religion, and then thoroughly determine and bind thyself with the strongest engagements; be positive, not halting.

Rule 3. Labour to have and keep right thoughts of God: Fix a lovely character of God in thy heart, fix the faith of God’s attributes, study this most; “This is life eternal.”

Rule 4. Be always in duty; racers must keep the path: Never be idle. As there is an end, so there is a way; never sit still. Lay it as a foundation, to be always in duty; never to quit that, whatever be: “Always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (*1 Cor.* xv. 58.) We by idleness lose much; we are employed in such a work as we must not suffer to grow cold. O, our interruptions do us much prejudice! Little and little make good speed at last.

Rule 5. Make the Scriptures thy rule; think, love, judge, and do according to this. Examine all things: As a man hath an end and a way, so hath he a rule to direct him; this is the Scriptures, reject all other guides but this.

Rule 6. Live near the LORD always; that which is expressed in Scripture by “walking with God, setting Him always at our right hand.” Let heart, thoughts and affections retain ever some impressions of his presence; fear always: Keep yourselves in the love of God; if departed, return again; if returned, keep with him. All good is with God, and all ill comes from his absence and distance: “Woe unto them, when I leave them.” Lose not your guide by

any means ; He is all things, life, light, strength and health : “ Wait continually on thy God. Without Me ye can do nothing. It is good for me to draw near to God.”

Rule 7. Never murmur ; justify the LORD always ; submit to every dispensation ; let your spirits be never rankled or fired. “ Walk humbly with thy God.” (*Micah* vi. 8.)

Rule 8. Keep your spirits in an equal balance, “ Be sober ;” (1 *Pet.* v. 8 ;) suffer not your passions to run to excess : Sober in weeping, rejoicing, speaking, doing, fearing. Be always master of thyself, unshaken.

Rule 9. Beware of worldly-mindedness, and of being too much engaged in the world : “ He that warreth doth not entangle himself in the affairs of this life.” (2 *Tim.* ii. 4.) Have as little to do in the world as ye can ; take no more in hand than ye are well able to master : If engaged, flee as a bird out of the snare, and put thy house in order, but put the world out of thy heart especially : “ No man can serve two masters.

Rule 10. Be watchful : Beware of a spirit of slumber ; stand always on your guard : “ Watch in all things ; Blessed is the man that feareth always.” Be always suspicious ; never return secure or careless ; remember your adversary is still busy, and his snares are continually set : “ Be vigilant” therefore, keep your eyes always open ; look and ponder every thing ; be not rash or hasty.

Rule 11. Be diligent in the means both public and private ; in hearing, meditation, Christian conference, ejaculatory prayer, reading ; especially private prayer, a man cannot be a Christian without this. Ye cannot work or travel, unless ye eat. “ The hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

2. Rules I follow in my daily Walk : Or, some special Rules for ordering my own particular Conversation.

RULE 1. In imitation of CHRIST and his Apostles, and to get good done, I purpose to rise early every morning.

Rule 2. To propose, when I am up, the work of the day, and how and when to do it, and engage my heart to it, and at even to call myself to account, and to mourn for failing.

Rule 3. To spend a competent portion of time every day in prayer, reading, meditating, spiritual exercises, morning, mid-day, evening, and before I go to bed.

Rule 4. Once in the month, either the end or middle of it, I keep a day of humiliation for the public condition, for the LORD's people and their sad condition, for the raising up the work and people of God.

Rule 5. I spend beside this, one for my own private condition, in conflicting with spiritual evils, and to get my heart more holy.

Rule 6. I spend every week once, four hours over and above my daily portion, in private for some special causes relating either to myself or others.

Rule 7. To spend some time on Saturday towards night for preparation to the Sabbath.

Rule 8. To spend six or seven days together once in a year, when I have the greatest conveniency, wholly on spiritual accounts.

Rule 9. My ordinary and extraordinary works, which every day I strive to finish, are, to mortify sin, to perfect holiness in the fear of the LORD, to glorify God, to instruct others and do them good, to attend on and walk closely with the LORD : This I propose every day to myself to do, and at even I examine myself of my progress and diligence therein ; this is my work and exercise.

3 *Rules in Speaking.*

I HAVE found by Scripture and experience how much it concerns us to watch our tongue, it being that instrument whereby we may do most ill or good to others. I will therefore set down some rules which I have proposed to myself for ordering my words.

Rule 1. Speak no idle language, that hath no profit or

edification, such as frothy words, “foolish talking or jesting;” but let them be seasoned with grace, as with salt.

Rule 2. Speak not much; be sparing in discourse, “Slow to speak. In the multitude of words there wants not sin.”

Rule 3. Speak soberly both as to matter and manner. A meek quiet spirit is calm in words; loud, violent, earnest speaking argues a proud, distempered, unmortified heart.

Rule 4. Speak not rashly nor hastily; be not precipitate in speaking; advise before you speak; do not out with every thing you conceive: “The righteous studieth to answer.”

Rule 5. Speak weightily and seriously, reverently and gravely, in religious discourses especially. CHRIST “spake as one having authority.” Our speech as to the manner, as well as to the matter, should betray us that we “have been with JESUS.” Be not slight or careless.

Rule 6. In speaking, it were good to be looking up in prayer to God in heart; as, if you have spoken amiss, ‘O LORD, pardon;’ when you are called to speak, ‘O LORD, open my mouth, and help to a seasonable word;’ to seek a blessing, ‘LORD, bless what I am to discourse to my neighbour.’

Rule 7. Speak in fear: It were good to have a bridle always in the mouth, and no word to get out without permission. (*Psalms* xxxix. 1.) It was ill said, “Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?” As there is eating without fear, so there is speaking without fear.

Rule 8. Let not your neighbour’s faults be the subject of your talk, though it be true. “Who backbiteth not.” (*Psalms* xv. 3.) Show thy neighbour his faults.

Rule 9. Speak not of thyself or worth: “Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth,” neither directly nor indirectly: Let thy works praise thee.

4. *Rules in our Actions.*

I SHALL comprehend in this both Civil and Religious Actions.

Rule 1. Do nothing without foresight; let thine eye of knowledge guide thee continually in the way thou art to walk in. First “search and try your ways,” then turn. “Ponder the path of thy feet.” (*Prov.* iv. 26.) Do all things as a man, and by rule, so shalt thou have peace.

Rule 2. Whatever thou do, do it spiritually as the LORD’s work; as to Him, because commanded by Him. (*Eph.* vi. 6,—8, *Col.* iii. 23.)

Rule 3. Labour for spirituality in your outward deportments, as well as in your hearts, in a grave, wise, sober and humble carriage. “Be holy in all manner of conversation.” (1 *Pet.* i. 14, 15.) Let holiness be on bells, pots, bridles and horses. (*Zech.* xiv. 20, 21.) Have on the wedding-garment.

Rule 4. In the midst of business look up ever and anon to heaven by ejaculatory prayer, to preserve the soul from corruption; and keep Divine impressions, that they die not out.

Rule 5. Whatever thou dost, depend on the LORD; do nothing without Him, but “in all thy ways acknowledge Him.”

Rule 6. Whatever you do, do it with all thine heart, that is, quickly without delay, and heartily doing what thou dost only, and nothing else.

Rule 7. Be sober in what you do: Eat, drink, marry and buy, as though you did it not, in an holy indifferency, referring the event to GOD. Be not fretted with cares, lay not out too much affection with your actions; but “let your moderation be known to all men, the LORD is at hand.”

Rule 8. Rest not in actions, but seek the end of an action. Rest not in prayer, but labour to attain the end of prayer

by meditation and prayer. Be not like children shooting at random without a mark.

5. Rules for our Conversation.

RULE 1. Mark your carriage, immediately after you have been near GOD ; see what deportment ye are then inclined to follow, and study that always.

Rule 2. Follow that kind of conversation wherein you have most peace after serious reflections on your ways: I think, little peace shall be found in a light carnal conversation.

Rule 3. Look to the carriage of CHRIST, his Apostles and Prophets, and study that conversation that you think was CHRIST'S or the Apostles; this was not a laughing, frothy, vain, light conversation. When therefore thou art examining such a carriage, ask, Would CHRIST have done this?

Rule 4. A grave serious conversation, mixed with serenity, is a good conversation; and this is like CHRIST, this is suitable to our great work and aims. Let the mad children of the world trifle and play, we are called to seriousness.

Rule 5. Be circumspect in your conversation, and wise, especially "towards them that are without." (*Eph.* v. 15, *Eccl.* ii. 14.) Keep up the Christian decorum: Let nothing escape thee but what is befitting the majesty of a Christian; labour not to disparage that at all. Walk worthy of your calling.

Rule 6. Walk kindly, lovingly and courteously; be ready to serve all: A tart rigid carriage is not good; "The SON of Man came eating and drinking." Stoicism is not Christianity. Through thy gravity and holiness let love appear; receive all; "become all things to all men;" yea, let your reproofs be in love.

SECT. 5. *Declaring some of SATAN's Devices, whereby the Work of Sanctification hath been hindered.*

1. AFTER falls and slips, SATAN has sought to astonish me with my fall, and to amaze and confuse me so with what I had done, thereby I was kept from getting up on my feet, and going forwards; like those that running a race catch a fall, and are therewith so perplexed, thinking what to do, that in the mean time they lose much time, and are far behind. The best way were to get up, and consider our ways, 'mourn, seek pardon, and then go to work; after the smiting of Israel, JOSHUA lies complaining; the LORD saith thus, "Wherefore liest thou thus?" (*Chap. vii. 10*;) Up to thy work. So in *Job xxxiv. 32*, "If thou hast done wickedly," what is done cannot be helped, "do so no more." He doth not say, 'Amaze and distract yourselves with cares;' for "Who can by thinking add one cubit to his stature?"

2. In making me think, that because I come not up the full length of duty, or to do it in that manner and form that is required, I had better omit it, whereby it hath come to pass that nothing hath been done at all, God not honoured, and others not profited; not considering that doing the duty as we may, is a means to the better doing of it. Hence the duty of reproof hath been omitted, because I could not do it so freely, evangelically and plainly as the LORD requires. This is over-driving; but it is better paying what we may, than let all run on our head. When DAVID saw what reverence was required to the Ark, he let it alone. "Who can stand?" Unbelief, whereby the soul thinks God such a hard master that will exact to the uttermost, and pride, in disdaining to do any thing but what may be worthy or meritorious, are the causes of this deceit.

3. By injecting thoughts materially good, yet impertinent to the exercise the soul for the present is called unto, whereby my purpose hath been broken. my spirit made vain, no good done, nor peace in it: And when other pal-

pably sinful thoughts have been extruded, these real enemies, yet seeming friends, have been let in, because of their sheep's clothing; yet it is but the Devil transforming himself into an 'Angel of Light.' The righteous "bringeth forth fruit in season." These thoughts are vain, because fruitless and unseasonable.

4. In doing of duties, and not seeking to attain the end of duties; not because I thought this worthy, but I thought it sufficient if the LORD was honoured: And in this snare I am ordinarily entrapped, though beaten out of formality. I have been like children who shoot, but at no mark, only that they may shoot; or as when they set their paper-boats to sea, but look for nothing else than to see them swim upon the waters; and so it may be said of them, "There is no end of their labour." And hence I have exhorted, not to convert or edify, but because commanded, and to show obedience; and thus have waited on the LORD in private and public means, not for supplying of wants or drawing near unto God, but merely to do homage unto him: Whereby there is a standing still and no progress; duties rendered a burden, because no end intended; and my motion irregular, because no end to direct: And so I have wrought at random.

5. Under the pretence of waiting on the LORD for strength, I have been driven to gaze, and neglect the duty itself, when there hath been an opportunity; so, in preparing for prayer, I have neglected prayer. In looking for strength and grace to edify when in company, nothing hath been done.

6. To neglect the practice of grace and duty, by resting in the sweet and relishing speculation thereof, and resolution to do it; I have been taken up with the sweetness of duty on the mind, but not so careful to practise it, though there have been some slight resolutions. This I thought sufficient, or else through security I have not expected difficulty in the practice; and so, knowing and approving, and teaching others the law, yet neglecting it.

7. I have been much hindered from duty, by studying

the manner of duty rather than the substance of it; by studying faith in prayer, rather than prayer in faith; by studying openness and plain-dealing in reproof, rather than reproof itself; by studying constancy in watching, rather than watching itself: Which I have found to proceed from pride, choosing the excellency of it rather than the thing itself.

8. SATAN subtly presses the doing of many things at once, which is impossible, that so, dividing my spirit with several objects, nothing may be well done: So that when I come to say, ‘What have I to do?’ it is answered, ‘Ye have this, and that, and the other thing.’ When I am called to one thing, I address to another, and thus “troubled with many things,” like MARTHA, (*Luke* x. 41, 42,) with which “one thing,” if my spirit were taken up, I might come to some profit, and get it done; but, seeking to grasp too much, I let all go. When many crowd out or in at a passage, they hinder one another; but the rule is, “Whatever thou doest, do it with all thy might,” that is, Let thy heart be taken up wholly with that one thing while thou art doing it, and with no other.

9. SATAN’S transforming into an Angel of Light, by gilding vice with the appearance of virtue. Hence have I been tempted to lightness, excess in comforts, under pretence of shunning unthankfulness, and of not using Christian liberty, and of walking uncomfortably. Prayer under indisposition hath been shunned, lest I should render the easy yoke of CHRIST a grievous burden: Whereby sin hath prevailed by these, though it hath been overcome when it appeared in its own clothing.

10. In following the disposition of my spirit as a rule in reference to duty, rather than the call of Providence, whereby many occasions of doing good have been lost through indisposition to these duties, and some seeming dispositions to do other duties.

11. SATAN, by making me pore excessively on evidences of grace, and by occupying me in laying continually the foundation, hath kept me from my work, and from my pro-

gress in grace; in which exercises, if I had been as diligent as in examination of myself, I might have been assured more quickly. It is true, we should examine our states; (*2 Cor. xiii. 5*;) but it is wrong to be continually taken up with this; so that when called to patience, and believing, and honouring of God, SATAN hath said, ‘Lay a foundation before ye build a superstructure.’ But it is dangerous to be trying our armour when we are called to fight.

12. In not prizing or esteeming little mercies, because common, and fear to rest in them, thus “despising the day of small things.”

13. In not shunning little evils, fearing to be thereby “tithing the anise and cummin.”

14. By “limiting of the Holy One of Israel;” by cutting out and prescribing to God a way of helping me; and when he hath not come in my way, I could not imagine his coming to be a mercy. Hence I have proposed God’s way with other Christians, and their exercises, as the way to the SPIRIT to deal with me; and not finding this, I have been discouraged, and disquieted, and unthankful, and “spent my” labour and “strength in vain,” in gazing after that, and labouring to walk in a path the LORD was not willing to lead me. I have limited the LORD in his way, by portraying to myself, and conceiving such a grace, and under such a notion and form; so that if I had not that very form, though I had it really, yet did I not think I had it. O under what various terms doth the LORD express one thing, that folk might not restrict grace to one notion!

15. Under the pretence of discretion, prudence and patience, I have neglected the life and zeal of actions. O, what ills lie disguised under moderation, sobriety, patience, and Christian liberty!

16. I have neglected the outward practice of repentance, under pretence that the LORD requires the heart; but we should serve the LORD both in body and spirit. It is true, we should not rest in the outward, or mainly look thereunto, but should look to the heart mostly; yet should not the outward act be neglected.

CHAPTER VI.

*Of my Call to the Ministry.*SECT. 1. *The Grounds upon which I judged myself called to the Ministry.*

1. I WAS much concerned to know whether I was indeed called by the LORD to the exercise of the Ministry, or whether any inclination or pressure of spirit I had thereto did proceed from my own fancy ; for I can never think that any will discharge this office aright, who hath not a sense of his Divine call upon his spirit : For such as the LORD hath not called, it is threatened that they “ shall not profit this people.” (*Jer.* xxiii. 32.) Therefore it is of much concernment to us to be clear in this.

2. Therefore did I judge it my duty to endeavour to have my call cleared to me, and for this cause set apart some solemn days, in which by fasting and prayer, both before I entered into the Ministry and after, I earnestly besought the LORD for light in this matter : The issue of all such deliberations was, that I was inclined to think, from what I could gather from God’s word or work, that He did call me to “ bear his name,” to “ deliver from the power of SATAN to God,” to “ witness for God,” that the works of the world were evil.

The grounds upon which I was convinced the LORD called me were, (1.) That I was not now to expect audible voices from heaven in an extraordinary manner, saying, ‘ Arise, preach the Gospel ;’ however Apostles and extraordinary Prophets were so called : Therefore, though I did not receive any extraordinary voice within or without, there was no reason upon that account to doubt of my call. (2.) That much less was a man’s own imagination to be counted a call from God ; for many think they are called of God, as *Jer.* xxiii, whom the “ LORD hath not sent.” (3.) That any act of man doth not give a call to any Minister ; for

ordination by Ministers, or election by the people, which are the two means by which it is pretended this call is conveyed, are posterior to this call of God: And, besides, Ministers may ordain, and people may elect, such as were never called of God.

4. As the revelation of God's word in all ages hath been the rule whereby to discern who have been called of God to be his servants, and who not; and therefore, when God revealed himself immediately to his Prophets, this immediate revelation published by the Prophets was the ground of faith and rule of practice: So now, the revelation of God's will being in the Scripture, it follows that by the Scriptures only we can know who are his Ministers called of him, and who are not; and this knowledge is as certain as any knowledge that could be had from the Prophets of old, and as clear and evident.

The Scriptures then I must look into, and by them know whether the LORD hath called me or not. The general I find in several places of Scripture: "Occupy till I come." (*Luke* xix. 13.) "As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister unto another." (1 *Pet.* iv. 10.) "The manifestation of the SPIRIT is given to profit withal." (1 *Cor.* xii. 7.) By all these Scriptures I gather, that whatever talents men have received from CHRIST, they are not to lie idle, nor to be kept in a napkin, but that they are to be exercised for God: And this Scripture, "Occupy till I come," is the general warrant that Ministers and all other persons of different occupations have to discharge their office. If any then inquire, What is my call to preach? I answer, Our LORD's command and call, "Occupy till I come." Ministers in preaching do but occupy till CHRIST comes. And here is my first ground. But,

5. By this general call, none is particularly engaged to follow the Ministry but such as are qualified: For he who is fitted for an artificer, for a scholar, for a lawyer, for a physician; although he is bound by this general to employ his talent for God, yet is not every one by this Scripture bound to discharge the office of the Ministry. It is there-

fore further requisite to a Divine call, that the person be fitted more for this, than for any thing else: He therefore who is not qualified for the Ministry, is not called; and he who is more fitted for this than for any thing else, is called of God, because he is called to minister as he hath received. (1 *Pet.* iv. 10.) A man's talent is the determiner of that general, "Occupy till I come." Now I begin to see what is my talent; and truly there was no other thing I was more fitted for than preaching and serving God in the Ministry: And though my parts were but weak, and my talent small, especially in the beginning; yet did I see some measure of Divine preparation for this work, and truly more than for any other employment, and therefore did I judge I was bound to occupy for God in that work. Some natural endowments I had, by which I was sufficiently capable of any science: The dealings of God with my spirit in the way of conversion were very distinct; and though I could not see but confusedly at first, yet afterwards I perceived that work very distinctly: And not only so; the LORD did not only, by conversion begun and renewed, fit me for the Ministry, but gave me great experience of the exceeding evil of my heart, of the terrors of God, that so I might know how to persuade others. He likewise opened my eyes to see the glorious mysteries of the covenant of grace, telling me something every day as it were: And truly I had not been many days in CHRIST's school, when I thought I was come to a new world; my former life seemed a dark howling wilderness, and the life of grace I looked upon as the lightsome Canaan, the harbour of rest. Various conflicts I had with unbelief, and much exercised with the Law and the bond-woman. I was much helped by some old writers; but especially by reading the Epistle to the Romans, by prayer and meditation, by which I came to receive very much satisfaction in my mind in the Gospel. Now I thought the great pains the LORD did take in this with me, the experience also I had of great afflictions, and the LORD's support under them, and delivering from them, and sanctifying the same to me, by

instructing me in many lessons by the rod: What should all this mean, but that the LORD gives me experience of these things, to the end that I should “make (this) his righteousness known in the great congregation?” If this be spoken in my ear, shall I not divulge it “on the house-tops?” And was not all this to qualify me, and make me a fit Minister of the New Testament? This was a second consideration to clear my call to me.

6. The LORD did by his SPIRIT apply the general call particularly to my soul: He brought home that word, “Occupy till I come;” and told me, the LORD called me to “serve Him in the Gospel of his SON:” For gifts and abilities to preach and pray are not a sufficient call to a man to be a Minister, though they be necessary to the call. A man’s natural gift and ability for any Magistracy doth not presently call him to that office; and some have gifts for divers offices, that yet are called but to one. And hence it is, that a man’s call to the office of the Ministry is in some things different from the call of believing: For it doth not oblige any particularly to the work of the Ministry without the working of the SPIRIT: And therefore is the application of the SPIRIT, in the matter of the call to the Ministry, a very necessary part, and requisite not only to enable us to the thing as it is in the case of believing, but likewise to warrant that particular thing. For, however the general call, “Occupy till I come,” warrant such as have parts and talents to employ them for GOD; yet doth it not warrant a godly able man to exercise his talents in a public ministerial way more than any others, until the SPIRIT determine his spirit: And this I found the SPIRIT did likewise to me, (1.) In representing to my soul the beauty and glory of the office of the Ministry. O to serve the LORD in this! said I; nothing is like it! To “testify” for GOD, to hold forth “the riches of CHRIST,” to bear his name: What more honourable employment! And like as the merchant must see the pearl before he buy it, (*Matt. xiii. 45,*) and we must “see the SON” before we “believe in Him,” so that the beauty and glory of the work of the Ministry

must be seen before we take with it. (2.) The LORD by his SPIRIT did incline my heart to this work ; and so many times I was taken off from other studies and exercises, and was set on this, and many times did I ardently desire it ; yea, I had marvellous delight in the exercise of any work belonging to the Ministry, in reading of Divinity, meditating upon or writing my thoughts, studying or preaching of sermons : And truly parents send their children to those trades that they observe them to be most of themselves inclined to. (3.) By preparing and qualifying me for that employment ; by renewing a distinct work of conversion in my soul ; by exercising me with various outward afflictions ; by discovering to me the mystery of grace and the Gospel : And the more fitted I was, the more inclined to the work ; and though I studied but little, yet the LORD blessed it marvellously. (4.) By doing my soul good, in being exercised in preparing for the Ministry : For it was by studying to preach, and meditation on several subjects, that my soul recovered out of my first backsliding ; and by meditating upon subjects, and preaching of them, I daily grew in grace and knowledge of CHRIST.

7. The LORD not only by his SPIRIT working inwardly upon me, but likewise by his work, did clear that He called me : For my heart was utterly averse to any other study or employment ; all attempts, designs and endeavours to settle in any other station were crushed and broken, and matters in the world went still worse and worse, till I resolved and engaged with the work of the Ministry ; and from that time I observed the weather turned, and my captivity was turned back. What judgment can I make of the LORD's barring all other doors, and opening this, but that I should go in here, and look to no other thing ?

8. I am much confirmed in my call to the Ministry by that Providence of the vows I made to this purpose ; that the LORD should so soon testify his approbation thereof, and answer me so suddenly, so clearly, so fully : For my want of assurance was my great doubt, and that which made me afraid to engage in the Ministry ; whereupon I

vowed solemnly, that if the LORD should clear up my interest to me, and reveal the mystery of the Gospel to me, I would then apply myself to the Ministry, provided the LORD did answer this in five years. But the LORD in less than six weeks answered it ; for in a month, or thereabouts, did the LORD convince me of faith, called me to believe, opened his covenant to me, never left me till I believed it, and then sealed it with the SPIRIT of assurance : And in my vow I said, that, if the LORD would hearken to me, in clearing these things, I would look on it as an evident token he called me to serve Him in the Gospel.

9. About the latter end of the year 1665, I remember the LORD put this call close to my door, told me I was to be his witness, to testify for Him against the world, to do all the good I could to mankind wherever I was called ; and that I should make this my only work, and be faithful, free and full in it ; that many things needed reformation, and that the LORD would employ me in it. This was pressed much on me ; and because I refused, and, like JONAH, fled from the LORD, He sent a storm of terrors after me, and I was cast into a sea and depth of hell many weeks : The work I was called to was so hard, that I durst not undertake it, but delayed it.

10. Another consideration, that cleared my call to me, was, That the Ministers and faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST did solemnly examine my call, and after trial of my gifts and conversation by several exercises recommended me, being intimately and of a long time acquainted with me, having preached frequently in their hearing, and were so far satisfied with me, that unanimously, without the least censure, they agreed to trust me with the dispensation of the Gospel ; and this was in the year 1672. They were better judges than myself, and they found the LORD had called me, and therefore did in the name of CHRIST declaratively empower me to exercise the office of the Ministry.

Lastly. When I consider the effects which followed on my admission to the Ministry, I am much confirmed in my

call ; for by preaching, and discharging my duty otherwise, I myself was watered, my gifts increased, more of the LORD's will was made known to me, and my labours blessed to many, to whose heart and case the LORD made me many times speak: And though, while I was in Scotland, I never received nor would take a sixpence for preaching, but lived upon what was my own, yet I prospered much in my outward estate in the world, I cleared my debts, I reserved some part of my estate to my debts, and maintained myself; I married all my sisters, insomuch that in fourteen years I was better by eight or nine hundred pounds sterling than when I began: And this I looked upon as a token of the LORD's acceptance of my labours.

As to the nature of my particular call to preach the Gospel; (1.) By ought I can discern through the moving of GOD'S SPIRIT, or the encouragement I had thereto, it was not to preach to any particular flock only, gathered or ungathered; but it was to preach to the whole world. The LORD had scattered both shepherds and flocks; we were then to preach wherever we could find people. Yea, though I had three calls from three different societies of Christians, yet did I not incline to fix with any. My commission, I thought, was rather indefinite than definite: "Preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven." (2.) And hence I was called to preach in a vagrant manner, sometimes at one place, sometimes at another, here and there, up and down the country, as I was called by the people, not staying above a week in one place. I loved not fixed stipends and pulpits, while the LORD JESUS himself was unfixed; but thought it most kindly to follow the wandering Ark and Tabernacle. (3.) The chief things I was called to preach and declare were, man's misery by nature, the nature of regeneration and salvation by CHRIST, and my spirit did more freely go out in a Gospel-strain than in a legal. I never in my sermons reflected upon the persons of Rulers or Councils; neither laboured to stir up the people, nor did I insist upon public differences. The substantial truths of Religion were the ordinary subject of my discourses,

and it was "CHRIST, and him crucified" that I was mostly called to preach. (4.) I was called to preach plainly, particularly, and authoritatively, as the messenger of JESUS CHRIST, with all sorts of persons, yet courteously, wisely, meekly, and gently. Not to speak in a cloud of general words, but, "Thou art the man," to reach home; nor yet to speak lightly or slightly, but seriously and gravely, that it may be revered and regarded by those to whom it is directed: For both we should speak, and they hear, as the word of God. (5.) I was called to "serve God in the Gospel of his SON," as my only work, to make this my trade and calling, in which only, diligently, "in season and out of season," to be employed; and to take no other thing in hand, but wholly to be given to this: "Give thyself wholly to these things," saith the Apostle to TIMOTHY; "We will give ourselves to the word and prayer." (*Acts* vi. 16.) I was called, (6.) to discharge the work of my calling in a special dependence on God, for light, life, assistance, wisdom, and a blessing. No calling, no work is there under heaven, wherein there is more need of dependence on God. Alas! we know neither what to say, nor how to say: "We are not sufficient for these things, but our sufficiency is of God." Nor ought we to speak any thing but as the LORD giveth utterance.

By this I perceive it is not every person, yea, every Christian or Saint, that is a fit and qualified person for the Ministry. They must be "polished shafts." Right "interpreters" are rare persons, "one of a thousand." (*Job* xxxiii. 23.) Nay, very few of those who are called of men, are called of God to the Ministry: For, (1.) Ministers must be persons of good parts and endowments, able to convince and put to silence adversaries; they must have knowledge and learning more than others. (2.) They must be Saints and Christians before they be Ministers; for "how shall SATAN cast out SATAN?" What do all his gifts profit, if a man want grace or charity? Is he not as "a tinkling cymbal?" How shall such "persuade" others, who themselves never "knew the terrors of the LORD?"

Shall they tell others the way to heaven that never themselves travelled that way? Is not this for “the blind to lead the blind?” Can a blessing be expected on the labours of such? (3.) He must have a more than ordinary stock and measure of grace, of knowledge, patience, zeal, experience, sobriety, watchfulness, faith: He cannot without this be “one of a thousand.” He must be one acquainted in some measure with SATAN’s devices, and with the corners of the little world, the *heart*. (4.) A godly, heavenly, pure, and spiritual conversation and behaviour, must illustrate what he delivers in preaching. To exemplify a godly life, is a clear confirmation of a Minister’s doctrine, and if it do not convert them, yet still it will convince them: And when the conversation is contrary, or short of the doctrine preached, that man “destroyeth what he buildeth,” he unpreacheth and confutes what he preaches, and gives occasion to people to think religion a stage-play. (5.) The Minister must have the sense of his charge, the danger of immortal souls, deeply imprinted on his heart. It must be clear to him, that the LORD hath called him, and to what he is called, and the weight and import of his charge. It is a matter of life and death. Hence the charge of prophesying, committed to the prophets, is called a “burden.” He that hath but slight impressions of his charge, will never faithfully discharge it. (6.) He must be a tender-hearted man, ready to sympathize with all that are in affliction either inward or outward. Compassion puts Ministers to do much for the souls of people; and when people see the compassion of Ministers, it takes much with them. (7.) They must always live near God; they must be, with MOSES, much in the Mount. (8.) They must be bold courageous men, “not afraid of the faces of men,” but “setting their face as a flint.” Of all these qualifications I had some small measure, of some more, of some less; though of none what I ought to have.

Yet I find I have great reason to be humbled for my short-comings in several things; as, (1.) That I have never been so sensibly affected with the great charge the

LORD hath put upon me. (2.) In that I have not applied myself wholly to these things, nor given myself to the word and prayer as my only work. (3.) I have not had that tenderness towards perishing souls, nor such sense of GOD's presence and the matters I have been speaking of. (4.) I have not so depended for counsel, direction, strength, and a blessing from GOD: I have spoken in my own wisdom too much, and I have not had things so purely from GOD. (5.) The duty of particular exhortation was much slighted; many means, as private conference, writing of letters, of saving and edifying souls, have been neglected. (6.) My conversation hath not been so shining and convincing as became a Minister. (7.) I was many times timorous and bashful, when I should boldly have appeared against sin and for GOD. For these, with many sinful defects, I desire to mourn and be humbled before the LORD, and to seek mercy through the blood of JESUS CHRIST.



CHAPTER VII.

Of my Marriage and Widowhood.

AT that time the Church of CHRIST had great rest and liberty from persecution, through variance amongst the statesmen, I was as busy as I could, and in August had gone North, and dispatched some business there: I returned South, but a violent persecution had broken out, and there began to be fining, imprisoning, taking, and summoning of persons, disturbing of meetings with soldiers. Yet the Gospel prevailed more and more, and we were like the Israelites in Egypt, the more we were afflicted, the more we grew and multiplied. Some hot-heads were for taking the sword, and redeeming themselves from the hands of oppressors: But I opposed rising in arms all I could, and exhorted them to patience, and courageous using the sword of the SPIRIT; and I did not see they had any call

to the sword, that their “strength was to sit still;” And, if they did stir and take the sword, they would therewith perish; but, if they patiently suffered and endured, God would himself some way support and deliver them. I had influence with the people; and, whilst I was at liberty, I did what I could to keep them peaceable. The truth is, there were great provocations given, so that we concluded it was the design of some Rulers to stir us up that we might fall. Ministers still preached and laboured amongst the people, many were brought in; the work of God in the midst of persecution did always prosper, until we destroyed ourselves; first, by needless divisions and difference in opinion, happening by reason of the Indulgence; and after by rash and unwarrantable taking up of arms most unseasonably in the year 1679; when the Dissenting party, met to worship God, being assaulted by armed men, and defending themselves, did kill about thirty men of their enemies: With this success, both being heartened, great numbers gathered together, but not in the LORD’s strength; and, by their unseasonable divisions, and folly of some, were made a prey to their enemies. The persecution became so hot in the latter end of the year 1674, and beginning of 1675, and always after that, that sometimes I was in hazard to be taken preaching. It was then I was excommunicated, with some other Ministers, gentlemen and women, yea, some persons of quality; but the LORD suffered not this ball, though it hit me, to do me harm: The Gospel still spread, and the people of all sorts ventured on converse with us. O let “my soul bless the LORD, and not” be “forgetful of his benefits; let me not conceal his loving-kindnesses, but show them to the sons of men.” Although the LORD afflicted me, and kept the cross still upon my back; yet did he likewise remember mercy, his mercies were “renewed every morning” to me. And, (1.) The LORD showed his mercy to me, in giving me a comfortable and suitable yoke-fellow, who did me good and not evil all the days of her life: In her did I behold as in a glass the LORD’s love to me; by her were

the sorrows of my pilgrimage many times sweetened, and she made me frequently forget my sorrows and griefs, and was the greatest temptation to me of saying, "It is good for me to be here;" so that I can seal to the truth of that, "An inheritance is from the fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD; whoso findeth her obtaineth favour of the LORD." I had not in herself alone a comfortable relation, but I had very much love and respect from all her relations, which were many, and in whose sight I found favour, that they considered me no longer as a stranger, but as their brother, and there was nothing but in what I could command them; and many of them, being Lawyers, Advocates, Clerks, and Judges, I had their service for nought, and glad were they to do me any good; by them I obtained several things, and warded off several blows: Nor did their love die with her, but continued constant to this day, as ready to pleasure and to do for me now as ever; nor know I so much as of any one breach that ever was betwixt us. She was kind: "The law of kindness was in her mouth:" She was prudent and well-bred, ordered her affairs with great discretion, and by her wisdom and activity did many things that were fair and lovely to look on; was truly religious, and not only would comply with me in any good work and spiritual duty, but many times would assist, stir up, and encourage, and remind me of my duty. (2.) I found much preserving mercy from the LORD. I was in great debts when I married; some considerable sums of money was I bound in, others I was not bound in, but yet they were truly owing, and I was not able to pay them, being my father's debts: Had those creditors fallen upon me while I was yet tender, they might have undone me, made my life and my wife's very uncomfortable; but such as I was owing to, the LORD was pleased to restrain, that they did not sue for their money until I was able to pay them; nor did others stir at all of my creditors, though I had fears they might seize money belonging to my wife; yet none ever moved. Some tried to do something by law, but I prevailed against them; and my cause seemed so just to

the Judges, that they could not harm me ; so that they agreed with me on what terms I pleased, which was, to pay them what and when I was able, and how I was able. (3.) The LORD was so gracious to us, as, although I had no gainful employment, nor ever received sixpence for preaching whilst in Scotland, nor a gift from any relation or friend, yet, by the blessing of the LORD on our management, I discharged a great burden of debt without wronging my estate. In that four years and half's time, I cleared seven or eight hundred pounds sterling which was owing to several persons, and did settle a debt, which betwixt principal and annual rent amounted to eight hundred pounds, for two hundred. My own estate was not above one hundred, my mother and public duties had thirty-five or forty pounds of it, it was not all well paid ; I had with my wife sixty-five pounds annuity, besides one hundred pounds of stock ; but it is true we got in above five hundred pounds of a desperate debt we looked not for. (4.) I looked on it as a piece of great mercy, that I had by my marriage better and greater occasions of serving the LORD and his people in the Gospel ; for, living in the most part in the South with my wife, I had frequent calls to preach both in the cities and country, so that few weeks passed that I did not preach twice on the LORD's-day, and once every week besides, and sometimes much oftener, and always to great multitudes, to several hundreds in the cities, and thousands in the country, being much followed where they knew me : There was not such a door opened in the North. (5.) I increased in grace, knowledge and gifts while married, both by exercising my talents faithfully, and having the opportunity of hearing the best gifted men in Scotland, by whom I profited both as a Christian and as a Minister ; and likewise by Providences of mercy and judgment shown me. (6.) Many experiences had I of the LORD's goodness in delivering me out of great straits ; as in sparing my wife to me when at the gates of death ; twice in delivering me from the hands of the enemies ; though excommunicated, yet thereby I received no damage ; though sought out to

be imprisoned, yet I was hid ; and when such as intended to apprehend me were come in where I was preaching, three several times was I preserved from them wonderfully. Money likewise to supply wants, and credit was cast in to me wonderfully : Especially at two several times, when, if a great sum had not been got, I might have been broken, and my friends with me. But the LORD lent it me, in stirring up some of whom I did not expect it at all, without any motion of mine, to offer freely to me more than would serve my turn. I had likewise experiences of the LORD's hearing my prayer very remarkably. And, finally, the LORD was pleased to bless me with children ; and I bless the LORD, he helped me in some measure to carry Christianly in a married relation, making conscience of private duties, having sometimes very sweet and heart-refreshing fellowship betwixt me and my wife alone, seeing and feeling much of the LORD's goodness shown to me while in that relation, doing nothing, and watching against what might stain my credit or authority either as a Minister or a Christian. And yet I desire to be humbled, to the justifying of God, and abasing of myself, for great shortcomings and failings, of which I was both in the time and since convinced ; as, (1.) I was not so useful and profitable to my wife, family, and relations as I might have been ; many an opportunity had I, which I in no wise improved ; I cannot tell if any of them hath got good by me ; I was not as the dew to them. (2.) I was not spiritual, but very carnal, in the use and enjoyment of lawful comforts ; had many times a sensual carnal frame, and designed no spiritual end therein : I did not, wherein I was called, walk so closely with the LORD, as I should and might. (3.) I was by the pleasures and satisfaction I found in a married condition turned off in my longings after heaven, and now began to see a greater good on earth than before, and was in my heart saying, " It is good to be here ;" my heart was glued to sublunary enjoyments, and much taken off CHRIST. (4.) I did sometimes perform family duty but slightly, and when in haste omit the same sometimes, and omitted read-

ing, and speaking from the word, and catechising; yea, and omitted many occasions of spiritual fellowship with my wife, although the time spent therein, and our fellowship that way, was the sweetest part of our married life.

And now there was an end put to my earthly joys, my sun of earthly prosperity was set, and my nights and “days of darkness,” and “the years wherein I have had no pleasure in them,” were come. Four years and a quarter did I live in a married condition, “rejoicing in the wife of my youth” in the days of my vanity, that is, from the latter end of July 1672, to the latter end of October 1676; then did the LORD who gave, take away from me the delight of mine eyes, and with her all earthly joys.

I cannot say but the LORD gave me some warning of this before it came to pass. I was threatened in the year 1673 with this, but the LORD spared her for that time: Likewise that Summer before she died, I was then in the North to settle some affairs; but a sudden damp was upon my spirit, by which I was overwhelmed with an unknown load of sorrow, and continued for the space of two whole days: I hardly during that time could speak, eat or drink; nor know I any cause for it; as it came without any cause, so within two days it wore off my spirit again. Now, these clouds upon my spirit are always forerunners of a sharp and bitter storm. Again, the sense I many times had of my sinful course of life, my short-coming, my distance with God, my not improving the mercies that God gave me, did many times, with some impression upon my spirit, presage the evil day coming; yea the extraordinary light and warmth of my sun did tell me always before a shower; for truly the goodness of the LORD to me was my temptation to fear. How frequently I said to myself, O how do I fear the “prosperity of fools” may “destroy me!” I perceive all the people of God that I know visited with sorrow upon sorrow; I see lamentation in the “tabernacles of JACOB;” only I have peace, increase in riches and children; have therewith peace and quietness, respect from others, and what not! O, surely if the LORD loves me, if I be

not a bastard, a stranger that hath no lot or part with the people of God, I shall not be suffered to walk in a world unknown, but shall mourn with Zion. Thus did I many times commune with mine own soul, and as Job said, "I was not at peace" nor quietness, "yet trouble came;" and, "The evil I greatly feared, was come upon me." Either, if the LORD loves me, (said I,) God will send some painful sickness or blast upon my estate, or I shall fall into the hands of the ungodly, or my wife shall be taken from me; some awakening or other I shall have, that I know: And accordingly, in the beginning of October 1676, having a call to Northumberland in order to do something, (which, after I inquired of the LORD, I was free to do,) my wife sickened of a fever, and some eight or nine days after died, in vain calling for me during a great part of her sickness, who was then fifty or sixty miles from her, and knew nothing. Letters were sent to me, but came too late, only a day before she died; and, having made what haste I could after I once understood she was sick, I came and found her dead four hours before. I indeed remember I was, when absent at that time, stirred up extraordinarily to mind her in prayer; and, about the very time she was dying, an extraordinary cloud of horror seized upon me, being then within twelve miles of my journey to our own house.

It is good for either man or woman to be first married and engaged with CHRIST before they be engaged with any other, otherwise we shall never carry well in a marriage-state: When once the heart hath made its choice, it is hardly brought to choose CHRIST; and therefore our days of youth are days of choice, in which we are to "remember our Creator." (*Eccl.* xii. 1.) The LORD was merciful to me, in engaging me with CHRIST before I settled any other way. (2.) It is not convenient, I think, that people not come to the years of discretion should marry; I was thirty-two years of age when I married, and needed all the wisdom and experience that by age I acquired to manage a married lot. (3.) As in all our ways we should acknowledge the LORD, so especially in going about marriage,

that we may marry in the LORD. For many years before I had thoughts of marriage, I earnestly besought the LORD, that, if ever I should change my relation, He would give me a comfortable yoke-fellow: And, when the LORD opened a door, I durst not so much as make a visit without prayer; and I set a whole day apart before I did propose marriage to my wife, to know the LORD's mind whether I should go on or not, and to seek his blessing in case I should see it of the LORD to go on. (4.) The great end of marriage is to get a meet help for furthering the soul's spiritual concerns: We are not therefore to match ourselves any way but such as may be conducive to that end; other ends and advantages are to be subordinate to this. (5.) Therefore doth it much concern us, that the person we marry be a prudent, pious and virtuous person: Fools, or graceless persons, we can never expect to be helpful to us this way; it is dreadful to take a lump of wrath in our bosom. He that marrieth a prudent, godly woman, is sure to have the LORD Himself to his Father-in-law. The seed of the woman and of the serpent can never agree, dwell, and walk together; nor can an ox and an ass, yoked together, draw equally. (6.) It is absolutely necessary that those we marry, be not of a cross but good humour naturally, and that they have some good measure of prudence; without these two you cannot live comfortably: Yea, grace, though I confess it makes fools wiser, and makes the rugged lions eat grass like oxen, yet it doth not destroy nature; and, if there be not the stricter watch, it will vent and cause disorders in the family. That we live religiously, and to God, we owe it to grace; but that, as men and women, we live comfortably, is much from prudence and good natural humour. (7.) It is a marvellous and a blessed thing, where God is pleased to unite in the bonds of love first these He in his Providence is pleased to join in marriage: This is the blessing of the LORD upon a marriage-condition; this is it which makes the married walk faithfully, in sweet spiritual communion with God, in joint spiritual duties and exercises, and which makes it so comfortable; and this I found by

experience. I found much sweetness in spiritual fellowship with my wife ; the pleasantest time we ever had was those few hours we spent together in prayer, in reading the word, in spiritual conference, and joint binding of ourselves to the LORD, in all which I found her very cordial ; nor can I say I found fellowship with any other so sweet as with her. What a great advantage is it, and how necessary, to be united by love with these with whom we join in fellowship ! (8.) Grace makes persons not only good Christians, but good in all relations. To say, a good woman, but a bad wife ; a gracious man, but a cross, peevish, sullen husband ; a holy man, but a bad master, or undutiful servant, is that which cannot be. (9.) Marriage is one of the most important steps of a man's life : O then, with what fear and trembling and godly dependence should we go about such a matter ! I shall never forget what a Minister said when marrying two certain persons, namely, ' That repentance mends all things but an ill-made marriage.' (10.) I have observed, that several gracious persons have been very unequally yoked with graceless persons, and that to be the sad lot rather of poor women than of men ; and yet this hath been blessed of God to them, and they helped to carry well under it. (11.) A marriage condition or state is both a blessed and comfortable state, and also a state liable to many inconveniences ; I found this fountain to " send forth bitter and sweet." As it was a life of much contentment, and as I saw much of the love and goodness of God, so did I see the same seasoned with many ingredients, cares and vexing fears, that I never found in a single state ; so that, if I were absent for four or five days, it was a terror to me to enter into the family, lest I should hear or know that either wife or children were unwell. (12.) Although marriage be ordained for preventing of fornication and burning desire, (1 *Cor.* vii. 4,) and in order to the birth of children to furnish the Church with a holy seed, yet are they not the only great ends of marriage ; for aged persons that are past having children, and such as never found violent desires, may lawfully marry, and that to have a suitable

help, a suitable companion, who may help us in our way to heaven. (13.) It is a very hard thing to guide a marriage lot, and to walk prudently and in knowledge, to keep such a spiritual frame as to possess our vessels in holiness, and, like ENOCH, to beget sons and daughters, and walk with GOD. Alas! I know not how to walk perfectly in a perfect way, nor how to behave wisely in my house: I many times omitted opportunities of doing good, slighted others; many times slightly and perfunctorily went about family duties, was carnal and excessive, was foolish in many things; yea, the comforts of a present life, wife, children, and relations, did blunt my desire after heaven, and I began to say in my heart, "It is good to be here." (14.) Loss of comforts is as bitter, yea, much more than ever they were comfortable when enjoyed. As I much comforted myself in such a comfortable yoke-fellow, so it was exceeding bitter when the LORD withered such a gourd. (15.) Mercies obtained by, and received as the fruit of prayer, are double mercies. What was comfortable and useful to me in a yoke-fellow I obtained by prayer.



CHAPTER VIII.

Of my Sufferings.

IT pleased the LORD not only to exercise me with personal afflictions; but likewise, for purging away and healing of my corruptions, for trial and exercise of my faith, patience and sincerity, for humbling of me, for manifesting his purity and holiness, and for confirmation and sealing of God's truth and ways, to honour me with public sufferings for his Name; by being reproached, oppressed and wronged, excommunicated, troubled with citations before Courts on that account, wandering from place to place many times for fear of my life, imprisoned, fined, and banished, and threatened with death itself.

The occasion of my sufferings was, dissenting from, and Non-conformity to, the Government of Prelacy ; for adhering to the persecuted, deserted party, who stood upon their former ground, cleaving to their former principles ; and for taking upon me to preach without the Bishop's authority. This in a short time exposed me to the lash of the laws against Dissenters, and malice of the Bishops, whose principles, ways, and courses, I was convinced, were not of God : For as to any other thing, whether immorality or sedition, I could not be charged therewith, being as to man unblamable, of sufficiently loyal principles, and kept from having any concurrence with any public insurrection ; so that there was nothing that could be laid to my charge, but as concerning my God and my conscience.

It is true, the very profession of religion exposed me to persecution, namely, to reproach and contempt, and made me not willing to bring my cause to their corrupt judicatories, choosing rather to suffer by unprofitable terms of peace, than to bring my cause before them to be heard publicly ; for I knew both my person and principles were unfavourable, and therefore doubted much of the issue of my cause.

Hitherto my troubles reached none but myself ; but now being married, they reached others : For within a very few days after we were married, and were preparing to go to the North, a messenger came with a summons to me to appear before the Council for keeping conventicles. The Bishop of Murray, in whose diocese I had preached, and a Privy Counsellor, for some pique he had at my wife, caused me this trouble. I was herewith troubled ; but my wife's friends, to whom I communicated the matter, dealt with the messenger to lay on a summons when we were to the North, where we were to be in a day or two, and then indorse on the back of his execution, that he found us not, which would make a new summons necessary ; and he did so. My adversaries were enraged at this, and, disdaining to be thus outwitted, sent one hundred and sixty miles a new summons, which, within two months after we were

come North, came to our hand : I was therewith much troubled on my wife's account, fearing that the public would seize upon any thing belonging to her ; however, I prayed to the LORD, and sought advice what to do, whether I should answer the Council's citation (as my friends advised me) or not, and take my hazard. The LORD was pleased to clear it to me, that I was not to answer the citation, which light I followed ; upon which I was denounced and outlawed. My wife was very cheerful under this. Within a short time after we came South ; and then understanding who were the authors of my troubles, I thought it wisdom to take them off ; and, for this effect, employed such as had the greatest influence with the Privy Counsellor to deal with him to abstain from such an action so far below him. I likewise came myself and spoke to him ; and the LORD blessed the means used so effectually, that he fell off, and was ever after a good friend to me ; and, having the executions delivered him, he would never give them up, by which means they came to nothing, and finally were altogether forgotten.

After this there was "silence in heaven for half an hour," but then the angels of war did sound their trumpets ; and amongst other Ministers I was sought for, and of new denounced. I was many times, while in the South, made to shift my lodging ; was frequently in fears and alarms, and preached in great temptations through the lying in wait of enemies ; I was several times interrupted in the act of preaching, by soldiers that by orders came to apprehend me ; I could get no business done. The LORD by this did only manifest his goodness in preserving and delivering me.

The Bishops and other wicked men perceiving all this time that they laboured in the fire, for the number of Dissenters increased, and the Gospel spread further and further notwithstanding all the violent means that were used for suppressing it and the professors thereof, they bethink themselves of excommunicating the chief Ministers that were most active in preaching, and the chief professors both gentlemen and others, to the number of between three or

four hundred in the first or second excommunication. It was a public writ, served by King and Council's authority, straitly discharging, under highest pains, all his Majesty's subjects to converse or speak with, harbour or receive into their houses, or administer any comfort to, the persons in the writ particularly expressed; this was proclaimed and printed: And thus for naked preaching were we processed as murderers and traitors, for such only used to be excommunicated. They thought this would keep the people from us, or force us (finding no shelter) to remove out of the land; and make us as ducks to decoy others, who, could they be proved to have received or harboured us, were finable at the Council's pleasure, and to be in the same circumstances which we were in ourselves. I was put in with others; for they knew that I had several times preached in the fields; they imagined also my parts were greater than they were: And therefore, though some friends strove that I might not be excommunicated, yet they could not prevail.

Although the adversaries had boasted of this as an effectual means for suppressing Conventicles; yet the LORD did wonderfully disappoint them, and turned their witty counsels into folly; for this great noise harmed not at all, it was powder without ball: As for myself, never one that cared for me shunned my company; nay, a great many mere carnal relations and acquaintances did entertain me as freely as ever they did; yea, so far did the goodness of the LORD turn this to my good, that I observed it was at that time I got most of my civil business done: And as the LORD preserved myself in this storm, so I did not hear of any excommunicated, or conversers with excommunicated persons, that were in the least prejudiced thereby; nay, this matter of the excommunicating of so many good and peaceable men did but exasperate the people the more, and procured to the authors of such rigid courses, a greater and more universal hatred.

Some two years and a half did I continue excommunicated, discharging the commission I had received from the

LORD JESUS in great weakness, I confess, (yet desiring to serve the LORD better, and humbled and grieved upon the account of my great failing,) and in manifold temptations, through the lying in wait of those who hunted after me : For the Bishops knowing that I was a Nonconformist, and very active in preaching in the fields, they therefore did stir up the King's Council against me, representing me as a person of very disloyal principles and practices ; so that there was a particular eye upon me ; and I was one of the three that a considerable sum of money was proffered for apprehending of, to any person, although nothing could be laid to my charge of sedition or insurrection, but only that I preached without the Bishops' authority. Many attempts were made against me, which for some years I escaped : At last, the Mayor of Edinburgh, being solicited by the Archbishop, and encouraged thereto by the promises of great rewards, did on the LORD's-day's night, being the 28th of January, 1677, by the treachery of a servant-maid whom for money he had corrupted, (who, being servant to a relation in whose house I ordinarily preached, had knowledge of my coming and going,) apprehended me about ten o'clock at night, which was the time the maid had appointed him to come to her master's house, as I was, after supper, recommending the family to GOD by prayer ; I was then interrupted and carried to prison.

He who apprehended me went immediately to the Archbishop, and told him the news of my apprehension, with which the Archbishop was greatly rejoiced, and, by giving some small token at present, and promises of greater reward, dismissed the Mayor. The Archbishop, overjoyed with his success, longed for the next day impatiently, on which, so soon as it dawned, he (being a Counsellor) sent orders to the gaoler that I should be kept close, and none suffered to have access to me, which was done, until some of the Counsellors in a committee met the same evening, before whom at five o'clock I appeared, where I was examined, and verbally charged as a seditious person, who did rend the Church of CHRIST, and was very active to make a schism ; as a Preacher in

field-conventicles, which was death by the law ; which they gladly would have me acknowledge, as likewise who they were that empowered me to preach : That I was excommunicated, and despised the law so far that I never made any application to be freed from that sentence : And that I was a person of very bad principles, destructive to all Government. And thereupon the Archbishop, who thereby thought to ensnare me by my own words, inquired, Whether I judged it lawful upon pretence of religion to take up arms against the King's Majesty ? This was the sum : And that I kept correspondence with some prisoners in the Bass, which the Archbishop confidently averred he knew. These things were not charged upon me all at once, but in a confused way ; and many things by way of question. I cannot say of any of the committee of the Council, but they were all civil and sober persons, of whom, if the instigation and fear of the Archbishop had not prevailed with them, I might have been moderately dealt with : But he did, in a bitter invective oration, represent me as a very odious and criminal person. To all which I replied, That I did acknowledge I was (though most unworthy) a Minister of the Gospel ; and that I indeed preached frequently, as the LORD called me, and independently on the Bishop : That the subjects of my discourses and sermons were not disloyal and traitorous, as the Archbishop did allege, but, according as I was helped, I preached "repentance towards God, and faith towards JESUS CHRIST," and no other thing than what was contained in the Prophets and the New Testament : That I was so far from being terrified or ashamed to own that I was a Minister of CHRIST, that although I was of no despicable extraction, yet that I gloried most in, and counted it the greatest honour I ever attained, to "serve God in the Gospel of his SON : " That I never preached nor stirred up the people to sedition, and was indifferent though the principles of my heart were as visible to their Lordships as the external lineaments of my face, so that they might read what was engraven upon my heart : That for rising up in arms against the King upon pretence

of religion, which the Archbishop alleged I maintained, he was therein abused; for I never knew of any, even the most zealous assertors of the liberties of the people, that did maintain rising in arms upon pretence of religion, pretences giving no ground or warrant for any man's action: That matters of prerogative and privileges were things of a ticklish nature, and of which for the present I desired not to give my thoughts, not judging the same within my sphere: That for such as did ordain me, I was not free to tell them, lest thereby I should bring others to trouble, although I should be most free as to matters concerning myself: That as I judged it not unlawful to preach the Gospel either in houses or fields as conveniency did offer, but duty, and an ordinance of CHRIST's, (so far was I from judging those meetings 'Rendezvouses of Rebellion,') so did I not acknowledge I at any time did preach in the fields; and if they thirsted after my life, to take it away upon that account, they could not expect I should reach the weapon wherewith to destroy myself, or that I should be either witness or accuser against myself, in a matter the law had made so criminal; and therefore for them to seek their proof and evidence elsewhere than from myself, for I was resolved none living should be able to make me guilty of such a weakness: That as for correspondence with any in the Bass, there was no such thing; and, if there were, I should be content to suffer the severest punishments: I denied the charge of schism, and left it to be proved: That, for my excommunication, I was then seven-score miles off when it was passed, and knew not of it till I saw my name in the printed papers, and so could not prevent it; and after I was excommunicated, I could not get any person that would so much as draw up a petition for me, being strictly charged to the contrary; and that from this, and fear of further prejudice, and not from the contempt of the law, it was that I did not move to have myself taken out of the letters of excommunication. In this and all the premises I was free and ingenuous with them: That I came not to justify my breeding before their Lordships, for I

acknowledged I was a rude man: (for one of the Lords challenged me of unmannerliness, that gave not the Archbishop his titles :) And finally, That I was now in their Lordships' power, and ready to submit to whatsoever their Lordships should determine concerning me.

After this I was remanded to prison again, but ordered to be kept more straitly than formerly: For my pockets were searched for letters, knives; ink, paper, and pen were taken and kept from me; all company discharged; which filled me with some melancholy apprehensions. But in my darkness was the LORD a light round about me: Him they could not shut out from me; for that night did I get a most kind and comfortable visit from the LORD JESUS, and I had one of the most sweet nights I had for ten years before that. Lifted up, by the sense of the LORD's love and favour, above death, sin, hell, wrath, Prelates, and Papists, about one or two o'clock in the morning I fell into a sound sleep, until, a little before six o'clock, I was awakened by one of the gaolers, who cried to me to make myself ready against six o'clock to go to the Bass, for so the Council had determined, which I very cheerfully obeyed; and so, with another person that was prisoner with me, was I, by a guard of twelve horse and thirty foot, convoyed to the Bass, where we safely landed on Wednesday morning, (being one night by the way,) and were delivered to the custody of the officer of that place, who commanded, as Governor therein, a garrison of eighteen or twenty soldiers.

The Bass is a very high rock in the sea, two miles distant from the nearest point of the land, which is South of it. It is covered with grass on the uppermost parts thereof, where is a garden where herbs grow, with some cherry trees, of the fruit of which I several times tasted; below which garden there is a Chapel for Divine service, but as no Minister was allowed for it, the ammunition of the garrison was kept therein. Landing here is very difficult and dangerous; for, if any storm blow, you cannot enter because of the violence of the waves, which beat with a wonderful noise upon the rock, and sometimes in such a

violent manner, that the broken waves, reverberating on the rock with a mighty force, have come up over the walls of the garrison on the court before the prisoners' chambers, which is above twenty cubits' height: And with a full sea you must land; or, if it be ebb, you must be either craned up, or climb with hands and feet up some steps artificially made on the rock, and must have help besides of those who are on the top of the rock, who pull you up by the hand. Nor is there any place of landing but one about the whole rock, which is of circumference about three quarters of a mile; here you may land in a fair day and full sea, without great hazard, the rest of it on every side being so high and steep; only, on the South side thereof, the rock falls a little level, where you ascend several steps till you come to the Governor's house, and from that, some steps higher, you ascend to a level court, where a house for prisoners and soldiers is: whence, likewise, by windings cut out of the rock, there is a path leading you to the top of the rock, whose height doth bear off all North, East, and West storms, lying open only to the South; and on the uppermost parts of the rock, there is grass sufficient to feed twenty or twenty-four sheep, who are there very fat and good. In these upper parts of the rock were sundry walks, of about threescore feet in length, and some very solitary, where we sometimes entertained ourselves. The accessible places were defended with several walls, and cannon placed on them, which encompassed only the South parts. The rest of the rock is defended by nature, by the huge height and steepness of the rock, being near forty cubits high in the lowest place. It was part of a country gentleman's inheritance, which falling from hand to hand, and changing many masters, it was at last bought by the King, who repaired the old houses and walls, and built some new houses for prisoners; and a garrison of twenty or twenty-four soldiers therein, are sufficient, if courageous, to defend it from millions of men. It is commanded by a Lieutenant, who reaps thereby some considerable profit, which, besides his pay, may be one hundred pounds a year and better. There

is no fountain-water therein, and they are only served with rain that falls out of the clouds, and is preserved in some caverns digged out of the rock: Their drink and provisions are carried from the other side by a boat, which only waits on the garrison, and hath a salary of six pounds yearly for keeping up the same, besides what they get of those persons that come either to see the prisoners, or are curious to see the garrison. Here fowls of several sorts are to be found, who build in the cliffs of the rock, the most considerable of which is the Solan goose, whose young, well fledged, ready to fly, are taken, and so yield near one hundred pounds yearly, and might be much more, were they carefully improved.

To this melancholy place I came, and continued there in prison for two years and a half; for I came in January 1677, and came out in July 1679. And here I had likewise experience of the goodness of God towards me. (1.) In providing for me, without being chargeable to any for such things as I stood in need of. (2.) In preserving and supporting me, under great pressures of spirit, from sin, sufferings, griefs, sorrows, and untenderness of brethren. (3.) In preserving me in health all that time. (4.) That in this time by improving my estate, I paid and cleared one hundred pounds of debt. (5.) I had the comfort and edification of fellow-prisoners, both Ministers and others, some there before me, and others brought in since my coming, whose company was sweet and edifying to me. (6.) We had liberty, for the most part, of taking the air up the hill: My solitary walks were sometimes very pleasant to me. (7.) I had the comfort of friends, that came in kindness to see us from the city and country. (8.) I had some special visits from God, ordinarily in private duties, and sometimes in worshipping and conference with others. (9.) Some increase (I think) I found in gifts, knowledge, and grace; some further discoveries of the knowledge of CHRIST and the Gospel I never had before.

As for my exercises here, and improvement of my time, I judged, when I first came here, that I was called to some

work: And therefore did I, (1.) Exercise myself in lamenting my sins, and mis-spent life, and great short-coming. (2.) I laboured after, and desired, some further knowledge of GOD and CHRIST, and to glorify God in my sufferings. (3.) Some hours, morning, and evening, and mid-day, I spent in meditation, in praise, and reading the Scripture, for keeping up and increasing communion with God, and increase of grace, and this constantly; besides several Fast-days, which were my sweetest seasons and best times. (4.) Every day I read the Scriptures, exhorted and taught therefrom, sung Psalms, and prayed with such of our society as our masters did permit to worship God together; and this twice a day. (5.) I studied Hebrew and Greek, and gained some knowledge in these languages. (6.) I likewise read some Divinity, and wrote a treatise of *Faith*, with some other miscellanies, and several letters to Christian friends and relations.

But prisons must be prisons, and all afflictions, though never so well sweetened, will be in some measure grievous. Though the LORD was pleased to put a very light yoke upon our necks; yet was it still a yoke, and some bitter ingredients were mixed in this cup, something of the gall and vinegar, that our patience and faith might be the better exercised, and to wean us from the world, and sweeten to us the love of God in supporting under such troubles, and delivering us out of them: For, (1.) It could not but be sad to me and my brethren, to think that we were cast out of the vineyard, and could not glorify God as we had done. (2.) Absence from natural and civil relations and friends was bitter, whose company was sweet, and which now we could not enjoy. (3.) The company of the ungodly, to whose hands we were delivered, and who ruled over us, was grievous; we lived among lions, wolves, and serpents, and dwelt in the tents of Kedar. (4.) Our own servants were turned out from us, and we made to seek servants whom we knew not; but this turned to our advantage. (5.) The great comfort that we had in worshipping of God together, and in eating together, was taken away from us by the folly

and fears of some, and envy and malice of others, who grudged us this comfort, and made us separate in worship and diet, and would not suffer us to come together. (6.) Sometimes, when they would take it in their heads, they would shut us all close up, and not suffer any of us to speak to another; and this not only without, but contrary to, the Council's order, who committed us free prisoners, and to have the liberty of the rock. (7.) They vexed us by mixing in our company, and there blaspheming sometimes; and other times seeking to ensnare us by the words of our lips. (8.) They laboured to debauch our servant-maids; insomuch that we could hardly get a maid to wait upon us. (9.) They by force kept the soldiers from conversing with or hearing us, although the poor creatures would gladly have heard us. (10.) At the same time I was very untenderly handled by some false brethren engaged in the same public cause. (11.) We were sometimes hard put to it for want of victuals and drink, insomuch that we had no other than snow-water, or corrupted water sprinkled over with a little oatmeal, to drink, and some dry fish: These with other things made our lives somewhat, and at some times, bitter to us.

While the Archbishop lived, no mediation of friends could get me out, although several means were tried, which all proved ineffectual; the Council not accepting the engagements I would give, which were no other than appearing when called; and I refusing their terms, which were, that I should not preach in the fields any more: Yet the LORD was pleased to answer my mind in some measure that I should come out, and be delivered, and that by giving great liberty to pray for it, and filling my soul with the hopes and faith of it. At another time the LORD was pleased to renew my commission to preach the Gospel, even a year before I was delivered; which made me think, and write to my friends, that I should be delivered. And, lastly, I was made (from *Jonah* ii. *ult.* “And God spake to the fish, and it vomited JONAH on the dry land”) to believe that the LORD would speak to this rock to give me with

others of my brethren up ; and accordingly, when the fulness of time came, I was delivered, even when we all judged it most desperate : For after the rash and unadvised attempts at Bothwell, expecting every day when we should be brought out to be a sacrifice to the fury they were then in ; behold, at that time did the LORD incline the heart of the King (out of what design we cannot certainly tell) to grant an Indulgence, and withal, to command and order that such prisoners as were not in accession to the late rebellion should be set at liberty : Upon which we were taken out of the Bass, and carried, to the number of eight or nine of us, to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh ; for though the King's orders did require we should be freely set at liberty, yet would not the Council let us go, until we gave security to appear when called, under the penalty of five hundred and sixty pounds. There were about fourteen of us prisoners at the time, and in twenty-four hours' space we found security for eight hundred pounds, for we would not give security to forbear field-meetings, because we saw no law for it, and because it was conceived by us dishonourable, and to reflect upon our Ministry. Forth we came, and were set at liberty, to the joy of our friends ; and while at liberty I preached every LORD's-day, and lived a wandering unsettled life. Whatever family I came to, I laboured to be somewhat useful there. I looked to my affairs, paid two thousand marks of debt at that time, and so continued until November 1681, that I with my sureties were cited to appear before the Council for preaching.

Now began persecution to increase and wax hot ; some Ministers were sent to the Bass ; the liberty the King had given for preaching, partly because it was not universally accepted, and partly by the Prelates' persuasion, was recalled by the King : And when they had gotten us to forbear meetings in fields, in hopes of liberty to meet in houses, the King, who gave his Indulgence but during pleasure, recalled his grant, and ordained the execution of the laws against Dissenters. The DUKE of YORK being then in Scotland, did much concur with the Prelates against

Dissenters, so that never one of us that ever appeared had any favour shown to us ; and Dissenters were as much put to it as ever.

Being South, as I returned I preached in a barn to a good number of people on a LORD'S-day : The Council got word of this, and it was informed against me that I preached in the fields ; so that orders were given to cite me and my surety both to appear before the Council ; but being informed better, and perceiving it was only a house-conventicle, their citation slept, and only spoke to my cautioner who was there, and who a short while after, coming North, found me lying sick of an ague, and told me how matters went, and that he was purposed to write to the Bishop of Edinburgh and the Lord Advocate concerning my case, and that I was very sick : Which I earnestly dissuaded him from ; for I said, If the Prelates hear I am sick, they will certainly cite me, in hopes that either I cannot appear being sick, and so fall in the forfeiture of my bond of five hundred and sixty pounds, which they would gladly have ; or, if I should appear, I might thereby endanger my life. This indeed I thought : But my surety would not be counselled by me, but acquainted the Bishop of my sickness, and that I preached not in the fields. The Bishop no sooner received this letter, by which he understood of my sickness, but incontinently he revives the citation, his brother being clerk to the Council. Some prejudice they had at my surety, (for he had been engaged in one thousand, seven hundred pounds sterling for Non-conformist Ministers :) They thought I would not appear, being sick, and the day of my appearance being in the very dead of Winter, the 22d of December, upon which they would cause my surety to forfeit his bond. A citation was directed North, of which we heard word about the beginning of November, and did think fit to prevent the same. Many of my friends counselled me rather to forfeit the money than to go, for both they and myself had some apprehensions that the Council intended to have my life ; for it was a time wherein the Council was in a very bad humour,

and at the very same time had found LORD ARGYLL guilty of treason for that which truly to us, that knew not the law, seemed to have no affinity therewith, and to some of the chief lawyers of note likewise. Moreover, I knew that preaching in the fields was death by the law to the Minister ; and that the law declared, That, if any person stood without to hear, though the Minister and body of the people were within doors, that such a meeting was a field-meeting ; and it was impossible for me to hinder or know when persons were without, and I thought it hard to shut the doors upon them. And besides, I was informed some notes of my sermon were in the Council's hand, and I knew not what they might make of popular discourses, though never so honestly meant. All these things made myself and friends have some fear of the danger of my life ; but notwithstanding, getting my head above the fear of death, I resolved upon all hazards, to appear. And I was much encouraged in this by my sudden and unexpected recovery (and that without any means) of an ague that I kept but six weeks in all : I not only recovered, but was so strengthened, that I durst undertake a journey of such a length, and so bad a way, in the midst of Winter ; and truly I found the LORD so gracious, that though I had been sick a short while before, and that the weather was very bad, yet was I kept from any prejudice, and came the day before that of my appearance to Edinburgh in good health, and my surety with me : And the day of my appearance happened to be the next day or second after the EARL of ARGYLL's escape, which put them in a bad humour.

The Council was surprised when I appeared ; and, after some astonishment and silence, an indictment was commanded to be read against me, charging me with preaching in the fields and without authority, and finally, with venting of principles that were pernicious, seditious and rebellious, and tending to alienate the minds of his Majesty's subjects from his Government. The Advocate for the King did refer all to my oath : And being commanded by the President to depose, whether I had preached in houses or in fields since

I came from the Bass ; and a few days' respite to answer to the indictment, being denied, I told them that I was ready to swear that I was innocent of what I was charged with in the indictment, and therefore desired I might have liberty to speak for myself ; which was granted. Then did I discourse to them a large half hour (without being interrupted) in answer to what I was charged with. My design in this was to prevent the torment of their questions, and likewise to state the true grounds of our sufferings, and vindicate myself and others of the imputations laid upon us by our enemies. The sum of what I said was ; after hearty and humble thanks returned for the liberty of speaking for myself, I protested, that I endeavoured to discharge what I conceived my duty with as little offence to authority as I could ; and that, were the things I was called in question about such as I could come and go upon, relating only to my own person or interest in the world, I should be loath to be heard with their Lordships, but refer myself and these things wholly to their disposal : That I should be short, ingenuous and clear in my answer for myself : That to the first and second head of preaching without authority and in the fields, that I had acknowledged I had preached, and was neither ashamed nor terrified to own this ; but that I preached not in the fields since I came out of the Bass, nor yet without authority, seeing I was called by God and such of his servants as I verily did believe had power from CHRIST for that effect ; and therefore was the first part of my indictment answered : That, as to my preaching seditious principles, I might with a good conscience deny it ; and, because that both myself and others were slandered as persons of disloyal principles, I should therefore give an account of what principles were maintained by myself and them, and what my practices were : That as to doctrines and articles of religion, my faith was contained in, and according to, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament ; that I was of the Reformed Protestant religion, and did approve, and was ready to subscribe to, that Confession of Faith in King JAMES's time, and ratified (I supposed)

by the present Parliament : That as to the King's Majesty's authority and power, that I acknowledged Magistracy an ordinance of God, and the present King's authority, whose subject and servant I was, and obliged to submit to, reverence and esteem, whom, for any thing relating to my person or estate, I was resolved never to resist ; but how far his power extended, or in what subject it was first placed, or how conveyed, I thought not so much my part as that of lawyers to determine. For the King's power in ecclesiastical matters, I acknowledged the persons of Ministers and other ecclesiastical persons subject to him ; and that he had a jurisdiction civil, reaching to not only civil, but likewise spiritual things, which he was to judge, that so he might, as the nursing father of the church, either encourage, or punish or restrain in a coercive way, and that not implicitly, seeing with others' eyes ; and that he might call Synods when and where he pleased, and propose his mind to them, whose duty it not only was, but wisdom, to take the Magistrate's concurrence when it might be had : But that it was undeniable, this power of the Magistrate's was not privative of any intrinsical power of the church, granted to her by CHRIST, for preserving and edifying of herself ; which therefore, in case of the Magistrate's opposition to the truth, or want of access to him through distance of place or other casual emergencies, they might exercise without him, as was clearly seen in the time of the Heathen, Arian and Roman Emperors. As for my practice, I can say, I have endeavoured to keep a good conscience both before God and men, to live unblamable, and peaceably, giving " to God what was God's, and to CÆSAR what was CÆSAR'S ;" was never in any insurrection, rebellion or conspiracy against his Majesty's person or government, nor ever stirred up others thereto, but rather to live peaceably, and by repentance, reformation, quietness, and confidence, and other spiritual means, to expect deliverance ; not by irritating of the Rulers, to make their bonds heavier, by taking the sword, and resisting by force ; and this both publicly in sermons, and privately in discourses. These therefore being

our principles, which we are not ashamed of, but ready to defend; it is a wonder to me how I, or any sober person of our way, come to be challenged for seditious principles and practices. If these principles be innocent, then is the second and great part of my libel, referred to my oath, eluded. And finally, I prayed the LORD to bless his Majesty with all his blessings both spiritual and temporal; that he might be a terror to evil-doers, an encouragement to the good; that the throne might be established in righteousness.

After this discourse, to which they hearkened very patiently, I was asked, Whether I preached since I came out of the Bass? To which I replied, I would answer to what I was charged with in my libel or indictment, which was not that I preached, but that I preached without authority, and seditiously; which I did deny. They inquired very earnestly and pressingly, who ordained me? I told them, I could not tell them, seeing it concerned others whom I was not to accuse; but that I had lawful and good authority, and that their Lordships could not compel me to answer to that matter: Nor judged I myself bound to answer thereto, because it was that, for which I was formerly questioned, and satisfied the law for; and therefore could not now again be called in question for the same fault. And, seeing that my commission to preach was before the Act of Grace, any crime therein (if any was) was by the Act of Grace purged: And besides, the same not being in my indictment, I was not bound to answer thereto. I was removed; and after some debate among themselves, (for many of the Counsellors were much taken with my discourse, and voted that I might be let go,) the matter being left to the Bishops, I was called in, and received the following sentence: To be sent to prison to Blackness, and to continue there until I paid the fine of five thousand marks, and gave security not to preach any more, or go off the kingdom. And my guard was ready to convey me to the common gaol of Edinburgh, there to remain.

Many of the by-standers (for there were multitudes there) were surprised at the severity of the sentence ; yea, some of the Privy Council talked publicly, that I had met with hard measure. Well, I came to the gaol, and had a chamber the best in the prison ; the keeper and under-keepers of the prison of Edinburgh were very discreet and civil ; I had abundance of visits every day from some good people and persons of quality. When I first came, I examined my ways and carriage, and found matter both of humiliation and thanksgiving unto the LORD : I saw ground to bless God, that I vindicated the LORD's people from the aspersions cast upon them ; I boldly and freely, to the conviction of all, owned our principles ; and I likewise desired not only to speak for myself, but to honour God : I saw ground of humiliation for many failings in me ; yet was glad if the Gospel did not receive prejudice by me. I got little good done ; for I ordinarily slept till seven in the morning ; and after supper, which was at eight o'clock, I was drowsy ; and all day over I was diverted with visits : Yet I got my speech written, and some letters, and preached twice every LORD's-day to the prisoners, and some few who were suffered to come in. Twice did I supplicate for my liberty while I was in Edinburgh, but could not obtain it, because of the Bishops and the clerk of the Council the Bishop's brother, who was my great enemy, though I never obliged him in my life.

After I had continued six weeks in Edinburgh, I was sent to Blackness, convoyed by four or five gentlemen of the guard, where I continued seven weeks. Ignorance, youth, and fear of man, made the governor of this place not so discreet as otherwise he would be to me : For, first, he kept me in a manner a close prisoner ; (another had still the key of my chamber, though I could command him to come and open it when I pleased,) which was not according to the Council's order. Next, he would be frequently drunk, and then was guilty of some extravagancies ; he likewise kept back many of my friends from coming to see me : And

the first night he was so indiscreet, as to put me into a cold, wide, dark, filthy, smoky room, where I could not have lived six days, if I had continued therein, for smoke, darkness, melancholy and cold, although at the same time he had better rooms; but his lady, though a child not above fourteen years old, and another gentleman that came along with me, prevailed so far with him as to change my room, and then I was very well. Here I continued seven weeks, doing little good, but longing and praying for deliverance out of that sad place; which the LORD thus brought to pass: My brother-in-law, unknown to me, presented a supplication to the Council in my behalf, desiring my fine might be remitted, myself ordered to be set at liberty, some competent time allowed me to settle my affairs in Scotland, seeing I was content to submit to their Lordships' sentence of banishment. Which supplication (the DUKE of YORK and the Bishop with his brother being away) was easily granted by the Council: An order was sent to the governor of Blackness immediately to set me at liberty, a month was given me to settle my affairs; whereupon I was much sooner than I thought set at liberty, and at a time when I little thought of it, and my liberty burdened with no clog or sinful engagement; being only bound that I should remove out of the kingdom and not return (without King or Council's leave) within such a day.

I did not know any thing of what my friends had done for me, nor could blame them for what they had done: The terms were honest upon which I was to come out; liberty was desirable, though in a strange country, and preferable to imprisonment at home. I looked upon wicked folk, though Scotsmen, as the greatest foreigners and strangers to me; a godly man in England or Ireland is more my countryman than a wicked Scotsman. Besides, by being at liberty, I should be in greater capacity to glorify the LORD than under restraint, where I could not see a godly person, nor be anywise useful save by a few letters. And I saw much of the mercy of GOD, that without paying

a fine, or engaging to any sinful terms, the Council should have given orders for my liberty.

Notwithstanding all this, when I thought upon my case, banishment was grievous and burdensome to me: But, addressing myself to the LORD, and pouring out my troubled soul, (as it was ordinary for me to do in such cases,) I found that this storm calmed; and the consideration of GOD's Providence over, and propriety in all places, experience of former favours, and especially that word, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," did sweetly stay my heart: And being called of GOD to wander from my father's house and land of my nativity, to a land GOD would show me, I laboured to fit myself for my journey, and to "take up my cross;" and the LORD so blessed my endeavours, in a short time I settled all my civil affairs, and was ready to come away at the time prefixed.

So as leaving Scotland and all friends there, I directed my course for London about the latter end of May, 1682, and after some stops and dangers by sea, I safely arrived there June 16, 1682. My voyage was much alleviated by the company of another countryman who came along with me, whose company was much satisfying to me. I brought not above twenty pounds with me to London; but the LORD I found was with me in all places where I was driven, for I had both meat and wages. I did resolve, indeed, as sensible of my own weakness, to forbear preaching, and any public work; as likewise, after long and great tossings, to improve, in a private station, my spiritual condition: But GOD did thwart this; for the more I endeavoured this way, the worse I became: And at the same time I had calls to preach at several places, some of which I closed with, and found more of spiritual advantage to my soul than in private exercises. Wherefore I resolved to follow that way, and did every night preach and pray in a private family, where about five or six neighbours at night did ordinarily resort. Every LORD's-day I preached to a

gathered Church, in fellowship with Mr. C., from whom I had ten shillings for every sermon ; at other times I likewise preached to others, but freely. And truly the LORD gave me to find great favour and respect from the English, and more than many others did, and whom I found to be as genteel, tender-hearted, and generous people as ever I conversed with.

I lived the first seven months upon my own charges for all things ; but afterwards I had a call from a widow gentlewoman to stay in her family, to pray, and sometimes exhort and preach. From her I had lodging and diet free, in whose house I prayed, read, and expounded Scripture twice a day, and thus continued till the 21st of July, 1683, that I was apprehended and imprisoned in Newgate for six months for refusing the Oxford oath.

Upon the 21st of July, 1683, about the time that a plot against the King's person and government was discovered, and about three or four days after my Lord RUSSEL's execution, at ten o'clock, I was expeding a certain business with a gentleman in Cheapside, and one MR. A., one of the King's messengers, searching for suspected persons in that very house where I was, and particularly for one MR. SANDS, meeting me as I came down, and knowing me to be a stranger, presently secured me by a constable, brought me to his own house, kept me prisoner five or six hours, and after brought me before some of the Council. There were the King, the Duke of YORK, Lord K., Lord S., and some others I know not. After some immaterial questions relating to my nation, where I lodged, and some others of that nature, I was asked what I knew or heard of a plot against his Majesty at any time? I replied, that I knew nothing of a plot against his Majesty's person or government, nor heard any thing but what was discovered since the plot did break out, nor knew or heard any thing I could make them the wiser by ; that I was no public person, nor frequenter of cabals or coffee-houses ; that I knew not any

one person, either accusers or accused, in that plot; that I always lived peaceably, and was never accessory to any plot or insurrection that ever was; that in my judgment I was against all violent attempts against his Majesty or government; and that it was not likely, any who had such designs, knowing my principles, would communicate ought to me of it; yea, that I always shunned discourses of that nature. Then the King was pleased to ask me, whether I judged myself bound by the solemn League and Covenant? I answered, that, for my part, I never took that Covenant, nor was it ever tendered to me; but what was of moral import in it, I judged I was bound thereto, although I myself never took it; and that however the words of the Decalogue and the Covenant were not the same, yet might the Covenant be reduced to it, as materially the same with the Decalogue. That I remembered two chief articles of the Covenant, the one was, ‘Reformation of our hearts and lives according to the word of God;’ and this I thought might be easily reduced to every precept of the Decalogue, each of which tied to reformation and repentance. After this I was asked some questions concerning my acquaintance with several persons, as MR. FERGUSON, MR. MUNRO, MR. BAILLIE of Jerviswood, and others, to which I gave a true, full, ingenuous answer, and was after commanded to remove. What were their thoughts of me, I know not; but it seems they were satisfied I was not in the plot, and that I dealt ingenuously with them, and yet were not willing to let me go, but referred me to the Lord Mayor, and ordered him to put the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and the Oxford oath to me.

The next day, therefore, I appeared before the Lord Mayor, and when asked by him, whether I would take the oaths, my answers did issue in this, that as for the oath of allegiance, I was willing to take it; for the oath of supremacy, I demurred upon it, until I advised better; and for the Oxford oath, I refused it. So an order was drawn, and I sent to Newgate.

In Newgate I continued twenty-four weeks. Here I had experience of the LORD's goodness, which did never leave me. I had, soon after I came, one of the best rooms in the prison, in which any person might lodge, a large, cleanly, lightsome, square room it was, and off the ground as you come in. The Captain and Under Keepers were all very civil to us, carrying both wisely and discreetly. I kept my health very well all the time I was there. We had comfortable fellowship with our fellow-prisoners, who might see one another all day. Some I perceived unlearned, yet obstinate. Such as I had greatest converse with, were those of our own persuasion, who were truly the most sober and learned that were there. In general, I found all of them civil. We were abundantly refreshed and supplied by numbers of all ranks and persuasions that came to see us. We wanted nothing; so that I could hardly call it suffering. Only this was sad to us, and which made me desirous to be gone and at liberty, (1.) That we had no occasion of doing good to others, for we preached none while there; for we were not suffered, nor others to come in to us. (2.) It was grievous to me especially, that I had no occasions or opportunities for retirement; for, having a chamber-fellow with me, and all day oppressed with visitants, I could not, in the twenty-four hours, command one for myself. Wherefore I did little or no good here, and got as little; only I gave my testimony for CHRIST, and had experience of the LORD's goodness. When the number of my weeks was fulfilled, I was without farther work set at liberty, the Turnkey getting word only from the Captain to let me out when I pleased. So taking my leave of the Captain, and thanking him for his civilities, I came out, my expenses in all not reaching above twenty pounds.

I observed hence (1.) Although at some times there be more or less of persecution, yet there is no time in which we shall be without daily crosses; for a wicked world will persecute with the tongue, even in ABRAHAM's family. (*Gal. iv. 28, 29, Gen. xxi. 9.*) Even when religion was

favoured, I found persecution by reproach, and contempt of wicked men. (2.) There are some special days of persecution, when hell breaks loose, and when great trials come, which are called “the hour of temptation, and the evil day, the hour and power of darkness.” (*Rev.* iii. 10, *Eph.* vi. 13, *Luke* viii. 13, 22, 25.) (3.) Seldom or never doth a great personal or public stroke come upon the LORD’s people, but He gives them some warning of it beforehand that we be prepared for it. (4.) The cross of CHRIST, when we once engage with it, is nothing so terrible, nothing so heavy, as at a distance: How dreadful did a prison and appearing before synagogues appear to me! But, when I did encounter therewith, I found it nothing so terrible to me. (5.) I was never in that trouble yet upon the account of CHRIST, but I was delivered out of it by the LORD, and that when it seemed very desperate to look for salvation. “The troubles of the righteous are many, but the LORD delivereth out of them all.” (*Psalms* xxxiv. 25.) We are to believe deliverance from all our troubles, though we cannot tell when or how. (6.) It is matter of great humiliation to us, that our troubles and afflictions do us but little good, that we are so unfruitful under the rod: And especially I observe, that small troubles have but small influence; every physic doth not work with strong constitutions. My lighter troubles, whether upon a personal or more public account, I found but little good by: It was a deep heart-reaching stroke that did me good: And in times of greatest fears, sharpest afflictions, it was ever still best with me; at first afflictions do not so much good, it is afterwards that they reap “the peaceable fruits of righteousness.” (*Heb.* xii. 10.). (7.) Persecutors are ungodly, are cruel, are deceitful; and this did I see evidently, all persecutors have these three properties: And therefore let us beware of such persons, and keep at the utmost distance with them, and expect no good from them; let us not lean on them who smite us; let us suspect all their favours, for “the kisses of an enemy are deceitful;

but let our eyes be only to the LORD.” (8.) Too great love, respect to, intimacy and communion with wicked men, and not standing at due distance with them, provoke the LORD to give his people into the hands of the wicked. The Israelites’ wicked confederacy with the Canaanites made them “briers and thorns in their sides;” had we carried to the ungodly as we had ought to have done, we should not have smarted as we do this day. (9.) Sufferings on public accounts are not only our duty, but our great privilege; to suffer for CHRIST, is one of CHRIST’s love-gifts. “It is given you to suffer for the Name of CHRIST.” (*Phil. i. ult.*) To give testimony for CHRIST and his truth, is our greatest honour. A sufferer and witness for CHRIST is the most honourable person and officer in the kingdom of CHRIST; it is CHRIST’s highest and honourablest employment. “They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for CHRIST.” (*Acts v. 41.*) (10.) Outward trouble from the hands of persecutors may be both a rod and correction for sin, and a testimony for CHRIST and his truth: The LORD JESUS may by one rod design both the correction and chastisements of his Church and people, and likewise design a confirmation and witness to his truth, cause and work. (11.) We by our sins therefore may provoke the LORD to deliver us into the hands of men, and by our weakness we may have some sinful hand and occasion thereto, and great failings attending our sufferings; and yet CHRIST accepts of our sufferings, so maimed, as a testimony for Him. (12.) I observe the LORD doth accept of the faithful endeavours, and honest intention and zeal of his people, when the methods, and particular means and courses they take for witnessing for CHRIST, are sometimes not altogether justifiable; as he who scruples through want of light an oath in itself lawful, out of zeal for the glory of God which he fears by taking this oath he wrongs, and thereupon suffers, this man’s sufferings are accepted of CHRIST as a testimony for Him. (13.) It is the people of God that only can undo and harm

themselves ; and it is by division that it is done : While we stood in one spirit, we could not be overcome or prevailed against ; but false brethren crept in amongst us, divided and broke us through the subtlety of adversaries, and drew us to rash enterpizes (14.) Though the Lord can sanctify and bless any lot to his people, yet to speak absolutely, an afflicted condition in the world is best for God's people.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. THOMAS TREGOSS.

THOMAS TREGOSS was born at St. Ives, near the Land's End, in Cornwall. His parents were godly persons ; and this was manifested in the education of their son, whose tender years they seasoned with the principles of religion, and good literature. About the age of seven years he began to discover that he was of a quick apprehension, and of a firm and tenacious memory : And he had from his youth a strong inclination to the work of the Ministry, and would often (when he was but a child) stand up upon a stool or bench, and after his manner preach to his play-fellows.

When he had attained grammar learning, he was sent to Oxford, and admitted into Exeter College, under the tuition of Mr. FRANCIS HOWELL : He soon perceived in him an awakened and quick spirit, full of vivacity and serious intention, insomuch as he made good the character which ARISTOTLE gives of a hopeful young man, *αγαπ ποιεῖν*, to act vigorously, which he showed in whatever exercises he was engaged in.

One day hearing DR. CONANT upon that text, “ O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ?,” (*Hosea* vi. 4,) some passages of that sermon made so deep an impression upon him, that his conscience was filled with no small terror. When he went to bed, he was not without fears that he should never live to see another day : When in his study, that he should never come out alive.

And so long as the terrors of his awakened conscience continued, he could not endure to hear a vain word, or to be

a spectator of what had but the appearance of sin in it. Yet by degrees these lights vanished away; neither did they at that time end in a thorough conversion.

When he had spent some time in the University, he returned to St. Ives, and having there given them some taste of his ministerial gifts, the inhabitants of that place invited him to be their Minister. This request he at first modestly refused, but at length, being overcome by their importunity, consented to spend some time amongst them: Whereupon he was, August 17, 1657, in that Church solemnly set apart for the work of the Ministry; and there he continued two years, a hard and close Student all the week, and a faithful and constant Preacher twice every LORD'S-day.

Before his departure from this place he took to wife MARGARET SPARMAN, who proved a meek, humble, affectionate yoke-fellow to him. And whilst he continued in this town, there were two Providences that ought not to be forgotten.

The Summer after his abode among them, much of the fishing-season was expired, and no pilchards appeared, the sense whereof greatly afflicted the inhabitants of the place; that town depending much upon the pilchard trade. Hereupon MR. TREGOSS persuaded them to join with him in keeping a day of humiliation and prayer; the duty being performed, the very next day came in a great shoal of these fishes.

The other Providential dispensation was this: The Summer following, the fishermen having taken a great number of pilchards upon a Saturday, all that night was spent in ordering of them: And the seamen were very intent upon drying their nets on the LORD'S-day. This MR. TREGOSS rebuked them for; withal, giving them to understand, that they provoked the LORD to withdraw his blessing, which fell out accordingly: For from that time to the end of the fishing-season they had no occasion of making use of their nets again.

From ST. IVES MR. TREGOSS removed in October 1659,

to the vicarage of Miler and Mabe, where he continued in his constancy of study and preaching till he was ejected by the act of Uniformity. And then, being excluded from the public place of prayer and preaching, he ceased not to preach in his own family twice every LORD's-day; which being known in the neighbourhood, divers who had the comfort of his Ministry in public, could not but thirst after it in private.

This being known abroad, the news of it was carried to the Lord Lieutenant of the county, who, for his refusing to take the oath appointed for the Militia, committed him to the custody of the Marshal, with whom he continued about three months, yet not ceasing to preach to his fellow-prisoners. At last he was released by an order from the Deputy-lieutenant.

In September 1663, MR. TREGOSS removed his habitation to Kigilliack, in the Parish of Badock, near Penryn; where he still kept up his LORD's-days exercises. About the beginning of October 1664, he and his wife lying awake in their bed, felt a great earthquake, which made the room to tremble under them, as they apprehended. And that which ministered to them great cause of admiration, was, that no one else felt the same: But this was but a prognostic of what MR. TREGOSS shortly felt in his conscience.

For on the first of January following, being a LORD's-day, it pleased GOD to direct him to preach on that text, "And that servant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." (*Luke* xii. 47.) Upon which text he showed what a dangerous sin it is to sin against knowledge. When the duties of the day were ended, the LORD brought his old sins to his remembrance, and set them in order before him, especially one above the rest. Hereupon he betook himself to duties, but drove on therein very heavily, yet did the LORD draw him on to persevere in the same.

Sometimes he feared the LORD would leave him to run

on in his former sinful courses : But GOD magnified his grace above, and beyond his fears. Sometimes in reading the Holy Scriptures the LORD would set home threatenings, and anon support him by his comfortable promises, to keep him equally balanced, between hopes, that so he might not sink, and fears, that he might not presume.

Thus for about five weeks he was detained under the spirit of bondage, having all this while no discoveries of GOD's mercy towards him, till about the beginning of February following : At which time, by GOD's good Providence, he met with a passage in one of our English Divines, setting forth the greatness and freeness of GOD's love ; which the LORD setting home unto him, he was somewhat quieted and refreshed.

The next day he had a sweet melting frame of spirit wrought in him for his sins, together with a lively contemplation of CHRIST's sufferings. He, who formerly thought it an hard matter to shed one tear for sin, had now plenty. The SPIRIT of the LORD also bringing that promise to his mind : “ I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more.” And that of CHRIST to THOMAS, “ Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.” After this, he was carried on in the exercise of duties with more enlargements and affectionate workings of spirit than formerly.

From this time he dated his conversion : For although his conversation for some considerable time was before irreproachable, and his labours in the work of the Ministry indefatigable, yea, and his zeal remarkable ; yet he judged the whole of his foregoing life to be no other than formality.

Some short time after this great change, being brought very low, he apprehended that his death drew near. But then was that Scripture brought into his mind, “ I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” (*Psalm cxviii.*) Afterward being again under strong apprehensions of his death approaching, and looking into his

Bible, God directed his eye to that portion of Scripture, "They were in great fear where no fear was;" (*Psalm liii. 5,*) which drove away that temptation: And not long after he regained strength to go on in his labours.

A short time after this, being very weak in body, and almost despairing of recovery, he went up to his chamber, as well as his feeble legs could carry him, where he fell down upon his knees in prayer: And whilst he was in this duty, he suddenly found that a great measure of strength was given him. Whereupon he attempted to arise, and to walk, which he accordingly did, about his chamber, very strongly.

Feeling this strange alteration, he called his wife, who soon espied the change, finding his pale cheeks had their wonted colour and complexion. And now he, that not many moments before was drawing near the grave, was enabled to perform the duties of the evening; yea, the next day's duties, (being the LORD's-day,) with much vigour and strength.

April 30, 1665, being the LORD's-day, whilst he was in prayer, he was much distracted about his intended preaching in public, whereupon he seemed to be drawn by a manifest course of Providence, which he resisted, till at last he was forced to yield. That week he had been wondering what the LORD would do with him: He could not study as formerly, but was induced and over-ruled to read a practical discourse of self denial: And the LORD furnished his meditations with many passages about sufferings, and the creature's duty to live in the will of his Creator, and to resign himself wholly to his disposal. And when he had ended his reading, casting his eye upon his Bible, the first words he met were those, "When He saw the multitude He had compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (*Matt. ix. 36.*)

At the reading of this text he inwardly trembled, and the LORD seemed to intimate to him, that he should put on the like bowels. But he questioned with himself, where he should find an opportunity of preaching in public? And

presently Mabe (which is a daughter-Church to Miler, and had preaching in it, only every other LORD's-day) was suggested to his thoughts: And after many reasonings within himself, being backward to yield to the will of God, he at last resolved to send thither to inquire whether any Minister would be there the LORD's-day following? Answer was returned. that there would be none.

Yet, still doubting whether he might look upon this as a call from God, he cast his eye upon his Bible, and met with that text, "No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, or under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they that come in may see the light." (*Luke xi. 33.*) This Scripture cleared all his doubts, and confirmed him in his resolution of preaching in public. And accordingly, when the Sabbath came, he went thither, and found the people willing to hear, and so he went on and preached without any disturbance, and the LORD assisted him in all the duties.

The report of this was soon spread abroad, and came to the ears of MR. THOMAS ROBINSON, a Justice of the peace. The next LORD's-day, being May 7, the morning proving rainy, MR. TREGOSS preached in his own house, upon this text, "In your patience possess ye your souls;" (*Luke xxi. 19;*) not expecting any disturbance that day by reason of the foul weather. But after the sermon was ended, MR. ROBINSON came to his door, and having entered, took the names of those that were present: And required MR. TREGOSS to put in sureties, or to render himself to the Constable upon his order the Monday se'nnight after; MR. TREGOSS refused to do the former, but promised to perform the latter.

After MR. ROBINSON's departure, they met again in the afternoon, and went through without any disturbance. The next LORD's-day he preached again at Mabe without interruption. But when the exercises were finished, he was served with a warrant to appear before MR. ROBINSON at Helston on the Tuesday following. At his appearance he justified his preaching with much boldness: But notwith-

standing all he said, he was sent to Launceston gaol for three months. This he submitted to, not only patiently, but joyfully. In his passage to prison he embraced all opportunities for confirming and comforting such Christian friends as he met with by the way. And whilst he continued in prison, his spirit was very free, and much enlarged with those refreshings which God gave him.

He spent his time in prison in reading the Holy Scriptures, in heavenly meditations, in fasting, prayer, holy conference with, and preaching to such as were his fellow-prisoners, or that came to visit him. The time of his imprisonment being expired, July 20, he was set at liberty, and after his return home he took the first opportunity of keeping a day of thanksgiving, for the many experiences he had of God's goodness, during his confinement.

He had not been at home above four days, when MR. ROBINSON gave out, that he would speedily send him back to the place from whence he came: And in order thereto, upon the Friday or Saturday after, he prepared himself to ride to the town, to meet another Justice of the Peace, who would join with him in a warrant for a second conviction of MR. TREGOSS and some others.

But whilst he was at a tenement of his, his own bull (which was never known to hurt any before) followed him in a field with much fury, and gave him several wounds, whereof he died.

August 20, MR. TREGOSS went again and preached at Mabe Church, it being the LORD's-day, and without any disturbance: The like he did on that day fortnight after; spending the intervals with much activity in his Master's service. Yet he had many dissuasives from preaching publicly, but all could not satisfy his conscience: And therefore September 18, he was again committed to Launceston gaol for public preaching: Whither he went with comfortable persuasions that God would carefully protect and provide for himself and his family.

This his second imprisonment in that place conduced to the good of many souls: For the report of his bonds being

spread abroad, many came to visit him, to whom he imparted freely his spiritual gifts, and by God's blessing upon his labours, some were begotten through the Gospel, in his bonds.

During this imprisonment he took several opportunities of visiting the common prisoners: He enjoyed many spiritual refreshments in his soul, especially in the time of duties: He had also many sweet and gracious returns to his prayers, and some prophetic intimations of future Providences. As,

October 2, praying earnestly that God would vouchsafe him opportunities of doing him service, the Lord gave him firmly to believe that he should shortly be released from this restraint, and that he should be no more imprisoned in that place; which God made good to him, notwithstanding many attempts to the contrary. Also October 7, being much enlarged in praying for patience, and submission to the will of God, he grew very confident that ere long God would farther try him. So October 23, God seemed sundry ways to intimate to him, that some great affliction was near at hand, but that he should be delivered from it; all which proved true.

December 14, he was delivered out of prison, and upon his return home he kept a day of thanksgiving; and shortly after he set apart every Tuesday, which he kept as a day of humiliation or thanksgiving, either with his family, or with others.

January 8, being the Lord's-day, he went to Mabe, where he preached both parts of the day without interruption; which was accompanied with this remarkable Providence, That whilst he was at Mabe, a Constable came to his house to seek him; but by that means missed of him.

January 12, he begun a journey towards the East part of Cornwall, and from thence went into Devonshire. The Lord's-day and Wednesday following, his house was searched for him; but being from home, he escaped their hands. In this journey he went forth on the South of Cornwall, and returned on the North, preaching in all places where

he came, and received great encouragement by the fruit of his labours.

At his return, February 4, going to preach at Mabe, the Constable served him with a warrant, to carry him under the custody of the Marshal, as a dangerous and seditious person ; which he was so far from being guilty of, that neither in his preaching, nor conference, did he ever meddle with the present discipline or Liturgy of the Church, much less with any State-affairs : Nay, he persuaded others to be obedient to the higher powers ; and in his daily exercises he put up many fervent petitions for the King's Majesty.

Being now under the custody of the Marshal of Bodmin, this brought him into acquaintance with several who reaped much good by his Ministry. The Marshal used him civilly ; yet did he meet with more difficulties than in his former confinements : But yet the LORD honoured him with the conversion of many souls.

He continued in this prison till about the midst of September. Being on a time very earnest in prayer, a portion of Scripture was presented to him, which made so deep an impression, that he was confident, if he was delivered, it should be by an order from the King's Majesty. And not long after, the Marshal received a special order from the King's Majesty for his enlargement.

In February 1668, coming to Penryn to preach his Monday's lecture, he fell sick of a fever, which held him all that week. Upon the LORD's-day morning, the sense of his weakness did somewhat affect him, because the people, who attended upon his Ministry, had none to supply his room : Whereupon he had that Scripture impressed upon his thoughts, "They that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength." (*Isa. lx. 31.*) This so much wrought upon him, that he resolved to arise : But all his friends that were about him laboured to dissuade him, knowing how weak he was.

When he had got on his clothes, he applied himself to

his LORD's work ; and as he went on it, strength by degrees was given to him, so that he preached thrice that LORD's-day, choosing that text afore-named (*Isa.* lx. 31) for his subject ; and to the great astonishment, 'as well of himself as of his friends, he found himself well at night, neither did he feel so much as any relics of his distemper afterwards.

In the beginning of the year 1669, the number of his auditors was so much augmented, that the rooms wherein they usually met would not contain them, which occasioned the removal of their meeting into a large barn, until, being summoned by the proprietor of that barn, to quit his house, he thereupon took up his habitation in the town of Penryn. Yet before his removal, a mittimus came from the Quarter Sessions, to send him to the gaol at Launceston for preaching publicly.

The Constables coming to serve the warrant, one of them more violent and furious than his fellows, whilst he reasoned with MR. TREGOSS, holding the mittimus in his hand, sunk down in the place, seeming to be dead : But by the endeavour of those about him, he was brought to himself, whereupon he departed without executing the warrant. That which made this the more remarkable, was, that he was a lusty man, and never fainted in his life before. And though they came again, some days after to execute the warrant, yet had they not power to carry him to prison : For which, (as it was reported,) the other Constable was fined at the next Sessions.

At the Summer Assizes, 1669, MR. TREGOSS having some affairs which called him to Launceston, in his journey was invited to visit the North-west parts of Devonshire : from whence, for preaching in a private house in the parish of Great-Torrington, he was sent to Exeter gaol, with several others, who, being all bailed, had for a time no other trouble than to traverse a bill for a riot, which was preferred against them.

This trouble which befel MR. TREGOSS in Devonshire.

was occasion of much good to many souls; for it opened a door to many hundreds in Devonshire, who resorted to him in his travels, and so became partakers of his gifts.

This made him to lay himself day and night to the utmost of his strength, allowing his body no more than extreme necessity required, that so he might improve all advantages and opportunities for the advancement of his Master's service. The bill which had been preferred against him at Exeter, necessitated him to attend the two following Assizes, where he was at last freed by proclamation. But in the mean while, his return into those parts was of no small advantage for the propagation of the Gospel. Some of those persons who discovered their malice against MR. TREGOSS, for preaching at Torrington, were shortly after taken away by unnatural deaths, not without signal tokens of God's displeasure against them.

After MR. TREGOSS came to reside at Penryn, he hired a house for a meeting-place on the LORD's-day in the parish of Mabe, where he exercised without interruption, from Midsummer, 1669, to the tenth of May 1670: After which day there were two persons that made oath against MR. TREGOSS and some others for breach of the statute against Conventicles: This scared away most of his hearers, especially those that had considerable estates. Yet, though there were many fines laid upon him, which amounted to two hundred and twenty pounds, the LORD so ordered things, that nothing he had was seized upon.

This meeting being thus dissolved, he resolved to preach the oftener to a statute number: And herein his labours were so many and so great, as though his body were of steel, yet could he not long hold out. For he preached five times every LORD's-day, and in the evening made repetition of some part. He also continued the Tuesdays and Thursdays exercises, besides some others. He was often advised by his friends to favour himself, and to moderate his pains: But the great zeal he had for advancing the work of God, stopped his ears against all dissuasives: Having at last worn out himself, he fell into a lingering cholic, which brought

him so low, that his friends judged him past recovery ; and he himself expressed a longing desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

But the LORD was pleased to reprieve him a little longer, and set him once more upon his feet. As soon as he perceived a small recruit of his strength, he began to fall upon his work again : Yet this continued but for a very short time, before a fever seized him, and put an end to his labours. His deportment during his sickness was like his life, very sweet and heavenly. Upon the 18th of January, perceiving the hour of his dissolution draw near, he took his farewell of his friends in a long speech, part of which followeth.

‘ Some may think me passionate, and some may think me uncharitable ; but now I repent that I had not dealt more plainly with you. However, in the truth of the LORD, according to mine ability, I have walked among you : And I hope that you will not think it tedious if I drop a few words upon my grave before I die.’ Then the physician stopping him, lest he should spend his spirits too much, MR. TREGOSS said,

‘ Give me leave to speak, for I am upon the borders of eternity : You may therefore suffer me to speak as much as I can. I am going to my great, to my blessed FATHER, to my best Friend, to Him in whom I have believed ; his face I hope to see ; in his bosom I hope to lie down this day. O ! what unspeakable glory to see mine everlasting God ! The last LORD’S-day, the LORD gave some sweet turns with himself : O ! it was a pleasant night with me : I was up with God ; and God was down with me. It was to me as the going up to Paradise.

‘ And, now my friends, I must tell you, “ that through many tribulations you must enter into the kingdom of God : ” Some of you have told me your thoughts concerning me, That I have walked in all good conscience towards God and man. O friends ! Whatsoever things ye have seen in me that were honest ; whatsoever things were just ; whatsoever things were of good report ; pursue those things

Rely not upon the world ; for the world will leave you cold and helpless. And now I must go to see the LORD, and this body of mine must be laid in the dust, and never rise more until the resurrection day. And must you go from this place, and come naked before the face of God? O friends, if there be any hope ; if there be any love ; if there be any consolation in you, think on these things ! And now, flesh and blood will say, It is hard to part with dear friends, to part with a dear wife, to part with dear children : But as the LORD hath given them to me, so I now leave them with the LORD.

‘ And I call you to witness that I leave this dear wife of mine with the LORD, and these dear children of mine with the LORD : To be protected by Him ; to be maintained by Him ; to be kept blameless to the day of his appearance. Though men may prove unkind to them, as I suppose they will ; yet the LORD, I know, will not. I must go into eternity. The Prophets do not live for ever ; neither can they prophesy for ever. I have been but a young branch, and you see the LORD is cutting me down this morning. O blessed LORD GOD ! Shall there not be a meeting in Paradise? Shall not thy servant see thee, and love thee, and embrace thee, and be embraced by thee? O LORD ! Give a good evidence to thy servant, that he may know that he belongeth to thee.

‘ LORD, Thou hast given him the working of an heart-purifying SPIRIT. And are not these tokens of thy free grace? And of thy love in CHRIST JESUS? And now LORD GOD, thy servant must away, and be about other work. Thy servant must away to holy angels, and to “ the spirits of just men made perfect.” He must away to serve the LORD in his upper chambers. He must away and never look on these things more.

‘ And now, O friends, one thing I tell you ; I shall come again with my LORD in most excellent glory, and you then must come before Him : But I fear some of you will be in a miserable condition. Well, I commend you to the love and grace of God, the Eternal Father in JESUS CHRIST.

And I pray you get your hearts full of the love of God, and of the grace of God, and full of the HOLY GHOST.

‘ Think on these things that I have delivered unto you, in the name of the LORD ! I must go, and deliver up my accounts to God : And O, that I may deliver them up freely : That I may be able to say, “ I have finished my course ; I have fought the good fight ; I have kept the faith ; ” and what remains, but that “ I receive the crown which the LORD JESUS, the righteous Judge, hath prepared for me ? ” And now I commit myself to the LORD : And my wife and children to the LORD : I commit my spirit to thee, O Father of spirits. I commit my soul to thee, O blessed LORD : Keep these that believe on thee.’

These words he spake with a more audible and clear voice than he was wont to do in his ordinary preaching. About an hour and a half after he departed this life, January 18, *Anno CHRISTI* 1670.

He did not, as some, take CHRIST to ease himself of his work, or to secure his lusts, but to kill them, and to quicken himself to duty. His peace of conscience was maintained, not by peace, but by war with sin : It was not only from, but in God : He had not only a form of CHRIST in his life, and picture of Him in his fancy ; but also the image of, union with, and love for CHRIST in his heart. He affected not so much disputes about the controversies of religion, as to get the power of it stamped upon his own and others’ souls.

His daily progress in the mortification of sin, was very remarkable and conspicuous. He knew full well that one reigning lust would darken his comfort, and harden his heart ; yea, bring all into bondage and captivity ; and therefore he durst not gratify any lust in the least. He was content to give up every lust to death for CHRIST, who gave up his soul to death for him. He thought it not much to part with any beloved sin for Him who was his beloved Saviour. Yea, he seemed to take more pleasure in subduing his desires, than others do in gratifying them. And lest his flesh should impose upon his more noble part, he

enured, and accustomed himself to many bodily severities, and denied himself such natural refreshments, as most others indulge themselves in. Yet did he not content himself with external mortifications, but maintained a daily conflict with the whole body of sin in corrupt nature. Yea, he would oft blame himself much for spiritual sins; as infidelity, pride, and unbelief, which others could least blame him for.

By his frequent and long sufferings he gained a great skill and dexterity in bearing the cross. By crucifying his heart to the world, he took out the stings of his sufferings. He knew that the Divine will was more eligible than his own, and therefore endeavoured to conform to it, as well by passive as by active obedience. He knew that he could not glorify God more, than by being content that God's glory should gain by his private losses. He durst not make sin a shelter against sufferings: Or bear false witness against God, by repining under the cross. He was not so well pleased with sin, as to prefer it before sufferings: Or so ill pleased with sufferings, as to fly from them when he was called thereto. He inured himself to the yoke of CHRIST, and so gained the art of bearing his cross. His conscience continued under a lively sense of sin, and that made him dead, and in a measure senseless under sufferings. His will was so far broken, that it could cheerfully bend to the cross; yea, welcome crosses, when in God's way he met with them. When God brought him into any affliction or suffering, he waited there till God brought him out. He knew himself to be nothing, and that made him to bear any thing from God with contentment: And by knowing his own vileness, he learned to justify God in every cross.

He had a fit disposition for the cross, which made that easy to him which seemed intolerable to others. As he durst not make men lords of his faith, so neither of his happiness, by doting on their smiles or fearing their frowns; but as worldly men content themselves with the world without God, so he contented himself with God without the

world. He had his present wants supplied by ordinary or extraordinary means, and therefore conceived it to be his duty to trust God for the future. He knew that he had more of the creature than he deserved, and therefore was not anxious about having more. He was much taken up about the weighty things of eternity, and therefore was little concerned about these baser things.

Notwithstanding his ardent zeal for God, yet was he of a quiet and peaceable spirit. He did not delight in contention, but was of a uniting, healing spirit. He was not only a patient, but also an agent in seeking after, and pursuing peace. He judged our church-divisions to be one of our greatest plagues. He had a catholic universal love for all. But he had a special affection for all saints, as saints making their graces, not their opinions, the measure of his love.

He desired to avoid all needless disputes. But when he was called to confer with those of different judgments, he showed forth much modesty and meekness; arguing not for victory, but to inquire into truth; wherein he affirmed nothing, but what he endeavoured soundly to prove out of the Scriptures; and when he could not fully comply with other men's persuasions, yet would he not impose his own on them, as the rule of their faith, or communion.

He was a diligent observer of his own spirit, its intentions, inclinations, motions, risings and fallings, as to sin or grace. He always kept a vigilant eye over his heart, and every night made particular reflections, on the passages of the day past, with a strict examination how he had spent it: What his conversation had been towards others? And how he had demeaned himself in his private duties towards God? He examined, not only what he had done, but also from what principles he had done it.

And thus, by the knowledge of what he had done, he came the better to know what he was to do; by studying well the book of his own heart and life, he became a good student, and proficient in the mystery of godliness. He

was a man of great observation, and of nothing more than his own spirit, its various vicissitudes, turnings, and windings.

Thus he came to have an intimate acquaintance with his own heart, and an experimental sense of the HOLY SPIRIT's working in him. Hence also he came to know what sins he had to confess, and humble himself for : What mercies to bless GOD, or to petition for : What burdens to groan under. At some times he found himself under great deadness and distractions : At other times under sweet inspirations of the HOLY SPIRIT, and enlargements of heart. Sometimes he sighed under unbelief ; at other times he was upon the wing of faith and full of courage.

Faith and prayer were his refuge in all his troubles. Indeed he seemed to drive a great trade with heaven by prayer : Wherein he was very powerful and prevalent. He had a struggling, wrestling spirit in prayer, bottomed upon a deep sense of his own need, large desires, and lively workings of faith. What strength he gained by prayer, he lost not by careless neglects after prayer, but improved it for GOD. His spirit seemed unsatisfied in duty till he had met with GOD or something from GOD. Sometimes he was dull and indisposed in the beginning of a duty, but before he came off, he found great assistance. When he found weakness, the LORD gave unexpected supplies of strength. When he was dejected under any fears, or difficulties from within or from without, he had recourse to his Bible, and thence received frequently such sweet and encouraging promises, set home by the SPIRIT of GOD, as afforded abundance of relief.

THE LIFE
OF
DR. SAMUEL WINTER.

SAMUEL WINTER was born in the year 1603, at Balsal, in the woodland part of Warwickshire, about seven miles from Coventry, of religious parents; his father was a yeoman of good account. When he was about twelve years old, it pleased God, by the Ministry of one MR. SLADER, then Preacher at the Chapel of Knowl, to awaken his conscience, and make him serious of his everlasting salvation; as also to stir up in him earnest desires of doing good to the souls of others; for which end one day as he came from School, about a mile from his father's house, he retired under a hedge to pray; and among other petitions, he begged of God that He would qualify him for the work of the Ministry, and make his labours effectual and successful therein: At which time he (at least thought that he) heard a voice saying to him; 'God hath heard thy prayer, and designed thee for that work, and thou shalt be an instrument of converting many souls to God:' This exceedingly cheered his heart, so that coming home, he applied himself to his father, humbly requesting that he might be trained up for the Ministry. His father asked him the reason of those desires? He told him, what a prayer he had made, and what return he had to it.

His father being much affected therewith; sent him to the Free-school in Coventry, where, through his extraordinary diligence, he made good progress in learning: Within a few years he became fit for the University; and accordingly he was sent to Cambridge, and placed in Queen's

College, and had for some time, that famous DR. PRESTON for his tutor. At the feet of that GAMALIEL, those natural and gracious abilities which he brought with him, were much improved; and by the direction of so excellent a guide, and God's blessing upon his unwearied studies, he attained great knowledge both in the tongues and arts, and in Divinity.

When he had commenced Master of Arts, being as yet unwilling to enter upon that great and dreadful work of the Ministry, he left Cambridge, and went to Boston in Lincolnshire, where he lived under the Ministry of MR. JOHN COTTON, out of whose family (some time after) he married a wife, one MRS. ANNE BEESTON.

After his marriage, he fell into a violent fever, which, in the judgment of his physicians, left no hopes of his recovery. His wife being much afflicted therewith, he would often comfort her, telling her that he should not die at this time; for that God had not yet fulfilled his promise, wherein He had assured him that he should be an instrument of converting many souls. And accordingly he recovered, and then resolved to apply himself to the work of the Ministry.

And being more ambitious to do God and his church service, than to advance himself in the world, he removed from Boston to a small living, near Nottingham, called Woodborough, where by a painful and powerful preaching (many out of the neighbouring towns flocking to his Ministry) the seeds of grace (through God's blessing) were sown in the hearts of many, which sprang up, and some of them remain unto this day. 'This place he always highly esteemed, and would often call it, 'His First-born.'

From Woodborough he was removed to York, where he continued a Lecturer for some time; and as there he had great opportunities for service, so had he great success; receiving a manifest seal to his Ministry, in the conversion and confirmation of many. But our Civil Wars breaking out about that time, he could stay no longer at York. Yet, though the door was shut against him in that place, another large

and effectual door opened for him. For Cottingham (a great town within three miles of Hull) being then destitute of a Pastor, thither he was (by a more than ordinary Providence) brought: And in that place, for about the space of eight years, he continued to be a “burning and a shining light:” Burning in his zeal and doctrine, and shining in his exemplary life and conversation.

He preached twice every LORD’S-day: He expounded the chapters which he read, and catechised the younger persons: In the evening he repeated the sermons in his own family, to which many of the neighbours also resorted. On the week days he took occasion to go from house to house, instructing the ignorant, and endeavouring to build up his parishioners in their most holy faith; and God was pleased so to bless his labours that he became instrumental in begetting many sons and daughters unto God, as also of confirming many, who attained (partly by his public Ministry, and partly by his private pains) a great measure of grace and gifts, so that they made conscience of the strict observation of the LORD’S day, of closet and family duties, and of other spiritual services required by God as fruits of their faith.

He was so meek and affable in his deportment towards all men, that his company was pleasing, even to many that had no relish of his doctrine.

At Cottingham he buried his loving and dearly beloved wife, who left him five sons: Which loss yet was (through God’s merciful Providence, abundantly repaired in his second marriage about three years after) with MRS. ELIZ. WEAVER, daughter of CHRISTOPHER WEAVER, Esq.; she proved to be excellently qualified for the good both of him and his children.

In 1650, the powers who were then in being, resolved to send over four Commissioners into Ireland, for the settlement of that distracted, and almost ruined kingdom; and judging it necessary to send with them a godly, able, and orthodox Divine, they ordered that MR. WINTER should attend these Commissioners thither. Which order

being sent to him to Cottingham, he looked upon as a clear call from God. Yet for his better satisfaction, he advised also with his friends, and begged direction from God in a business of so weighty concernment ; after which he cheerfully embraced this call, hoping that God would bring some glory to his own name : And so, not consulting with flesh and blood, which might have suggested that it would be an unadvised act to part with so loving a people, and with so good a Rectory, (it being above four hundred pounds a year,) and to cast himself upon strangers, neither knowing nor capitulating with them what his salary should be : resigning his living, he prepared for his journey.

At his coming over to Ireland, the Commissioners allowed him but one hundred pounds for the first year, which yet he cheerfully accepted of, though it did not defray the charges of his transportation, with such necessaries as he provided for the comfortable accommodation of himself and family ; much less did it repair the losses which he sustained shortly after his landing.

In this his first year he attended the Commissioners in several journeys, which they made into the four provinces of Ireland : Was their household Chaplain, performed family duties, and preached in public every LORD'S-day wherever they came : And in Dublin, (where they resided the greatest part of their time,) he preached twice every LORD'S-day in Christ Church before the Commissioners, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of that city ; many gentlemen and others resorting to his Ministry.

Not long after, some other Ministers coming from England to Dublin, the Commissioners (for the ease of MR. WINTER) used to request one or other of them to preach in the morning, reserving MR. WINTER for the afternoon ; but he, not willing to be out of employment, set up a lecture, where he preached every Sabbath-day in the morning, at seven o'clock, in the Church of St. Nicholas : And this lecture was frequented by the Commissioners, Civil Magistrates, and many others, so that he had a very large congregation.

About this time the Commissioners taking notice, that Trinity College, by Dublin, through the iniquity of the times, and the distractions of that kingdom, was left desolate by the Fellows and Students, and thereby brought almost to ruin, they thought it their duty, for the advancement of religion and learning, to endeavour the restoration of the same, and for that end they appointed MR. WINTER to be the Provost of it; where, after a time, he commenced Doctor of Divinity. In a short time he procured the return of divers of the Fellows and Students to the College, as also the coming over from England of several hopeful young scholars, whereby the College was suddenly filled with many religious young men, likely to prove instruments of God's glory.

And by the great pains which he took with them, instructing them both in human and Divine learning, preaching and expounding the Scriptures to them, and often praying with them, both in the College Chapel and in his own lodgings, he gave as great hopes of the flourishing of that seminary of learning and piety, as of any college in Christendom.

Whilst DR. WINTER continued Provost of that College, he had occasion to go to a place called Manooth, a populous town, about ten miles from Dublin; where (according to his custom in most places where he came) he preached, and found the people very attentive, and desirous to be instructed in the way to heaven; whereupon, at the earnest request, both of the Minister and divers of the inhabitants, he rode over every three weeks and preached, which he continued for some years, and God was pleased to bless his labours for the conversion of many English and Irish.

When he returned into England, he and his wife sojourned with some friends, sometimes in and about Westchester, sometimes at Coventry, and sometimes with his wife's relations in Hertfordshire and Rutlandshire, in which places (through God's blessing) he became an instrument of much good, not only in the families wherein he abode, but also to several neighbours.

Whilst he was in Rutlandshire, on Thursday, October 13, in the year 1666, he rode to a neighbouring town to assist in carrying on a day of humiliation, wherein, having wearied his body and spent his spirits, he was fain to defer his return home till the next day. On the Lord's-day following he exercised twice, for the instruction of the family wherein he abode; and at his going to bed, he found himself not well. On Monday he continued ill, yet arose, came down, and performed family duties.

At dinner he could eat but little, and at night went ill to bed; yet slept pretty well; only both those nights he complained of a pain in his right side, and he had frequent provocation to vomit. Oft he found himself cold; yet when he came a little to the fire, he was too hot; so that his friends judged it would turn to an ague.

Wednesday and Thursday his distemper continued; on Friday, finding himself weaker and weaker, he desired his Will might be fairly engrossed, which lay by him written with his own hand, and withal, he laboured to persuade his wife to be willing to part with him, adding, that it would not be long before they should meet again. Then he put up earnest prayers for her and others of his relations.

On Friday he sat up all the day, though still finding his strength to decay. He would often repeat that of the Psalmist, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." On Saturday, he had all day the cramp in his left leg. In the evening he went to bed, and in the apprehension of those about him slept well that night.

About six o'clock on the Lord's-day morning, he raised himself up in his bed, and with a cheerful and loud voice called to his wife, who lay in a bed by him, saying, 'Sweetheart, I have been this night conversing with spirits;' and, as in a rapture, he cried out, 'O the glories that are prepared for the Saints of God! The Lord hath been pleased to show me this night the exceeding weight of glory which in heaven is laid up for his chosen ones.' Saying further, 'That he had studied, and thought that he knew as much what the glory which in heaven is as another man; but he

now saw, that all the Divines on earth were but children in the knowledge of the great mystery of heavenly glory, which the LORD that night had given him a clearer sight of, than ever formerly he had.'

Then he desired that his relations, and the rest of the family might be called up, that so he might make known unto them that immense weight of glory which that night had been revealed to him. When they were assembled, he did, with vehemency of spirit, endeavour to discover the same unto them; but he was so swallowed up in the contemplation thereof, that he could not utter what he desired.

And so he continued all that day, and even till he died, in very high raptures, and great acclamations by way of thankfulness to GOD for the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the fountain of that glory.

Towards the evening of the LORD's-day, an honourable person, together with his lady, and some other friends came to visit him, with whom he discoursed about heaven and the things of GOD as understandingly, fervently, and fluently, as if he had enjoyed his best health: His understanding and memory continuing as strong and vigorous as ever: In his discourse he quoted several texts of Scripture, citing the very chapter, verse, and words, and explaining the meaning from the Hebrew and Greek originals. After this discourse, which continued for the space of two hours, finding himself weary, he betook himself to bed, all the company withdrawing into another chamber. And after an hour's repose, he desired that the said honourable person, with his lady, and other friends might be called in again, that he might speak something more to them, and when they, with the rest of the family were come into his chamber, he told them that he had but a short time to live: That he was going to JESUS CHRIST, with Him to partake of the fulness of joy, and of those rivers of pleasure, which GOD had so lately discovered to Him, and which He had reserved in heaven for those that love Him, and keep his commandments. O (said he) 'if you had but a thorough sight thereof, it would make you all love the LORD JESUS

CHRIST and holiness ; which is the only way prescribed by God to attain to this happiness.' And so he went on to magnify the riches of free-grace, through which alone the saints come to enjoy that exceeding eternal weight of glory, " which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive."

He also exhorted them not so much to trouble themselves in getting assurance of salvation, as to examine themselves carefully, whether they were in the way of sanctification : And for this end, he advised them daily to ask their souls these two questions : ' What am I ? And where am I ? ' ' What am I ? ' Am I a new creature ? Am I born again ? If so, then I have new thoughts ; new words ; new company ; and a new conversation : All old thoughts, words and actions will be done away. Secondly, ' Where am I ? ' Am I in the narrow path that leads to life, or in that broad way that leads to death and damnation ? He told them, that if any there present were still in the broad way, it had been better that they had never been born. And (said he) ' If you will make this your continual meditation, you cannot miscarry. And if you find yourselves to be in the narrow way of sanctification, let God alone with the rest, to give you an assurance of your future happiness, which He will certainly do in his own time.'

Then looking up towards heaven, he begged of God that the words of a dying man might make a deep impression upon the hearts of his hearers ; and that as God had made him an instrument of converting many souls in his life, so He would bless what he had now spoken.

He proceeded to other holy discourses and instructions, quoting sundry texts of Scripture for the proof of what he spake, naming the chapters, verses, and words of the texts, which he opened, and explained out of the originals, with such acuteness and strength, with such zeal and fervency of spirit, that he drew tears from the eyes of all that were present.

He further declared (with tears trickling down his cheeks) that he had many a time before he went to preach, put God

in mind of his promise, and earnestly besought him to make good that promise, by giving a blessing to that word, which he was then going to deliver: To which his prayers God had often been pleased to give a gracious answer, and to let him know it by the conversion of some by those very sermons.

One of his relations, fearing his spirits would be spent by his continued discourse, requested him to repose for a while; to whom he replied with much earnestness: ‘No, were I sure that this should be my last night, and the last sermon that I should preach, I would continue it two hours longer.’ Adding, that he was not afraid of death: And turning his head backward, he said, ‘Death is a coward; he comes behind me: He dares not look me in the face.’ And he further said, ‘The Devil hath often assaulted me in my life-time; but God stood by me, so that he could never hurt me.’

All the day following, he lay in heavenly contemplations and raptures, often breaking forth in praises to God for JESUS CHRIST; and he sometimes desired his wife, to tell him whether he were in the body or out of the body, for he could not tell.

In the afternoon finding death approach, he wished that his sons had been present, that they might see what it was to die. He desired also that some neighbours might be called in, that he might preach his last sermon to them: And, to this very time, his spirits, speech, and memory continued active and strong.

About four in the afternoon, his wife standing by his bed-side, asked him how he did? He answered, Very weak: Adding, that he was going to JESUS CHRIST; and bade her not to be afraid of death; with which words he put forth his hand, and said, ‘Take death by the hand: Be not afraid; death is a coward; he flies from me:’ They found that his hands were cold and clammy, whereby they perceived that he grew near his end: And himself not long after, feeling that the dissolution of his earthly tabernacle was approaching, lifting up his eyes, cried out: ‘Come, LORD

JESUS :’ And presently, with a smiling countenance, he added, ‘ Art thou come?’ And so fell asleep.

There remain some things to be spoken, which could not well be reduced to any one part of this narrative ; so therefore these were reserved to the close of all, that the reader may have a view of them all together : And they may be thus ranked in order.

1. His great humility and meekness. 2. His diligence in his calling. 3. His zeal and fervour of spirit. 4. His liberality and bounty. 5. His great candour, and ingenuity. 6. His faith and patience. 7. His power in prayer.

First, to begin with his Humility : All that knew him, will readily acknowledge this to have been very eminent in him ; and that, not only in his words and garb, and some trivial actions, which may easily be counterfeited.

But in him, humility was of an higher strain, and deeper rooted in his heart. He could condescend to men of the lowest rank. He used to magnify the abilities of others, whilst he thought meanly of his own, and was not offended if others did the like. He could easily bear the contradictions of others, and stoop to the meanest offices.

Secondly, his Diligence in his calling was very exemplary. A hard Student he was all along, and so continued to the last. It is scarce credible, but to those that saw, and knew it ; what number of books were found in his library, filled with transcript out of the authors which he read over ; besides pieces of controversies, and observations of his own. And indeed, there were few books that he read, but he took notes out of them, and made marks in them of what was most considerable. To which if we shall add all his manuscripts, we cannot but conclude him to have been a most faithful, and painful labourer in the LORD’S vineyard. His daily practice declared him to be a person very careful to redeem time, and as fearful to lose, or waste it.

As soon as he was up in the morning, whilst he dressed himself, either his wife or servant read to him some chapters

in course out of the Old and New Testament. When he was dressed, he retired to his study, where he ordinarily continued till he was called down to prayer and dinner : After which he took opportunities of discourse with friends and neighbours. After two or three hours' intermission he returned to his study again, where, for the most part, both in Summer and Winter he continued till about eight o'clock, seldom eating any supper.

When in the evening he was come down, calling his family together, he read a chapter in course, gave the sense of it, went to prayer, and so to bed. Here also may be added, that as it was his care to be well prepared before he went to preach, so did he strive to get his heart into a right frame for preaching, that from the heart he might speak to the hearts of his hearers : And to obtain assistance from God therein, he used to beg a blessing upon his labours. It was his frequent saying, 'That he was as circumspect and diligent in studying what he was to deliver, as if he expected no assistance from CHRIST ; yet when he came to preach, disowning his own endeavours, he cast himself upon CHRIST, as if he had not studied at all. And that God many times suggested such matter in the delivery of his sermons as he had not thought on before, which also he observed God did abundantly bless to the comfort and edification of his auditory.'

He would often say, 'That his opportunities were his riches,' and he was always careful to improve them ; whence it seldom came to pass, that he preached without making some real impression upon his hearers.

Thirdly, His Zeal and Fervour deserve our serious consideration. It was the counsel of a holy Divine, 'That Christians should take heed their old judgments did not abate their youthful affections : ' And certainly there was in him such warmth of affection as seldom is seen in so ancient a man ; yet it was managed with such prudence, that he exercised it, not about light and trivial matters, but about the greater and more substantial points of religion.

and that through the whole course of his life. Whether he preached, prayed or discoursed about divine things, all was performed with much zeal and warmth of affection: He was “fervent in spirit, serving the LORD.” (*Rom. xii. 17.*) O how glad was he of an opportunity of preaching, and if (after the black day) his liberty could have been purchased by money, what would he not have given for it!

He was very affectionate in prayer, and yet were his affections so tempered with prudence, that though upon extraordinary occasions he could enlarge therein, yet in his family prayer he was usually short, that so he might not make religious duties a burden to those that joined with him.

He was conscientiously careful in the sanctification of the LORD’S-day; not permitting any discourses in his presence, but such as were suitable to the day, and the duties thereof: And he would reprove such as took liberty to discourse about their worldly businesses upon God’s holy day.

Fourthly, His Liberality and Bounty were as eminent as any other of his virtues. As God gave him a large estate, so He gave him a large heart, which was a double mercy. He was “rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate: Laying up in store for himself a good foundation against the time to come.”

Fifthly, To this may be added his Candour and Courteous Deportment, which gave a great lustre to his bounty.

As his faith and patience appeared in the whole course of his life, so they eminently shone when he came to die. In the time of his sickness he showed an humble, holy, and cheerful resignation of himself to the wise and merciful disposal of God, his heavenly Father. Not one repining word was heard to proceed out of his mouth: He was “dumb and opened not his mouth, because it was the LORD that did it.” (*Psalms xxxix. 9.*) There was not so much as an impatient or uncomely motion seen in him: But being full of faith and Christian courage, he feared not death, but would often say, ‘O how happy a thing is it, by death to be above the possibility of sinning!’

He often declared, that in his younger days he had been sorely vexed with SATAN's temptations ; but at last meeting with a plain, honest Christian, and complaining of his fears, he first rebuked him, and then instructed him, saying, ' You look at the reward without minding your work, in that you desire and expect assurance, before you have well resolved of doing your duty. My advice therefore is, to mind what GOD requires of you in your present station, and be serious and diligent therein, and assurance will come in GOD's due time.*' This advice, he professed, was of great use to him all his life after ; so that from that time forward he was not troubled with such perplexing thoughts : But lived and died in peace both with GOD and man, October 22, 1666.

Lastly, His Power and Prevalency in prayer was very remarkable.

The wise SOLOMON tells us, that " a good man obtaineth favour of the LORD ;" (*Prov. xii. 2 ;*) that is, he hath what he will of GOD. It is written of LUTHER, *Iste vir potuit a Deo quicquid voluit* : That by his prayer he could prevail with GOD at his pleasure : MELANCTHON and MYCONIUS, being sick of desperate diseases, were both recovered by LUTHER's prayers. SOZOMEN saith of APOLLONIUS, ' that he never asked any thing of GOD which he obtained not.' Blessed is he that hath what he will, and wills nothing but what he should. The persons of Saints (saith a reverend Divine) are like secret pledges of common quiet, and their meditations and prayers are a shield to the earth against the wrath of heaven. Faithful prayer (saith another) is able, after a sort, to alter GOD's mind, and to transfuse a dead palsy into the hands of Omnipotency ; as (*Exod. xxxii. 10 ;*) where GOD is fain to bespeak his own freedom, " Let me alone."

We have many examples in Scripture of the power and

* Assurance of the forgiveness of sin, and of adoption into the family of GOD, is produced by the HOLY SPIRIT, and is immediately consequent upon believing in JESUS CHRIST. This assurance every penitent sinner should be taught to expect in the simple exercise of faith.—EDIT.

efficacy of prayer. JACOB would have a blessing, and by prayer wrestled and prevailed. The woman of Canaan (*Matt.* xv. 23.) came for a cure, and a cure she would have ; and she had it at last, with an high commendation of her faith. God heaps mercies upon his suppliants, and blames them for their modesty in asking : “ Hitherto (said He) ye have asked nothing ;” that is, nothing to what you might and should. “ Ask and have, that your joy may be full.” (*John* xvi. 24.) Many other Scripture examples might be produced, but lest any should think that the like are not to be found in our days, take notice of these instances following :—

When an order was sent to MR. WINTER from the Parliament, to attend their Commissioners into Ireland, his wife was very unwilling, and some of their near relations came on purpose to dissuade him. In this strait he retired into his study, (as his usual manner was in like cases,) and there with much earnestness spread the matter before GOD, craving his direction therein. And the LORD was pleased to set it upon his spirit, that he should go, and be carried in safety thither, and there become an instrument of converting many souls to GOD. When he had declared this to his wife and friends, they acquiesced, and so he resolved upon that journey : And though they took shipping in the midst of Winter, and went with a master that was not well acquainted with those seas, yet they found the seas calm, and their passage so speedy, that the captain of the ship said, in his whole life he had never known so calm and speedy a passage.

Not long after MR. WINTER's coming into Ireland, he went with the Commissioners unto Kilkenny. where COLONEL JONES's wife fell sick of the yellow jaundice, and some other distempers ; her husband invited certain Ministers, and some other friends to spend some hours in prayer in her behalf : And MR. WINTER was the last man that prayed ; but before he began, he asked her, ‘ Whether she had faith to be healed ?’ She answered, She thought she had.

Then he went to prayer, and wrestled exceedingly with God; and when he had done, he went again to her, and said, that she should live, and not die at that time: At this saying of his, his wife and sister were much troubled, and told him in private, they would have given much money rather than that he should have spoken so. But he again told them, that she should not die at that time.

Yet she continued very weak for a month or more, till her Doctors gave her up for a dead woman, whereupon Mr. WINTER's wife again blamed him, for his confident saying, that she must live; to which he smilingly answered, 'Well, she is not yet dead.' At length her disease so prevailed, that she lost the use of her senses, and her servants that stood weeping about her said, 'Now she is near death indeed.' The Saturday following, as Mr. WINTER sat at dinner, a messenger came to him from COLONEL JONES, to tell him, that if he would see his wife alive, he must come away presently, for she was now a dying. At this Mrs. WINTER was much troubled, because of her husband's former confidence in promising her life: But Mr. WINTER made no great haste to be gone, saying, that he knew well when God answered his prayers, and when not.

After he had dined he went to the house, where he found the COLONEL sitting by her, ready to close her eyes so soon as the breath departed out of her body, for so she had enjoined him in the time of her health. She lay speechless, and without the use of her senses, not answering, nor moving her eyes, though her husband and Mr. WINTER called unto her, whereupon her husband judged she had lost her hearing. Mr. WINTER requested that he might pray with her; but her husband refused, saying she was senseless, and had been a dying all that morning. Mr. WINTER urged again that he might pray; 'No, (said the COLONEL,) it is to no purpose; she is a dead woman.' Yet Mr. WINTER urged the third time that he might pray, saying, 'Her life is

yet in her ;' and so he went to prayer with much earnestness and importunity.

When prayer was ended, MR. WINTER going to her bedside, she looked upon him, and with a smiling countenance said, 'O, see the fruit of prayer ! O, see the fruit of prayer ! Set me up, and give me something to eat : I am cured, but not by the art of Doctors ; only fervent prayers have prevailed with God for me.' They asked her, What she could eat ? She answered, 'Any thing.' They gave her some bread and butter, of which she ate pretty heartily. Then did her husband send for her Doctors ; but she bade them not provide any more physic for her, saying, That she would take none, for she would not dishonour God, nor wrong prayer so much as to take any more physic : Nor could she by any means be persuaded to it.

On Monday following MRS. WINTER hearing that MRS. JONES was walking in her garden, went to see her, and found her there. So soon as she saw MRS. WINTER, she went to meet her, and said, 'O, see the fruit of prayer !' MRS. WINTER blessed God for her recovery ; whereupon she said, 'My Doctors would have me take more physic : But it is God that hath cured me, and He only shall have the praise of it. I will take nothing of them ; they shall not boast that they have cured me : For God by prayer hath done it. It is prayer alone that hath done it.' And indeed herein God made good that gracious promise : "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (*James* v. 15.)

Some months after, MR. WINTER with his family removed to Dublin ; and after some time, the aforesaid MRS. JONES fell sick again ; whereupon MR. WINTER and his wife, and her sister went to visit her : When they came she called for MR. WINTER to pray with her. A lady that was present, coming to MRS. WINTER's sister, said, 'Do you think this good woman will recover, or not ?' She answered, 'I know not yet ; but when my brother WINTER hath done

prayer, I will tell you more.' When MR. WINTER had ended his prayer, she came to her again, and said, 'What think you now?' She answered, 'She believed that she would not recover,' and so said MRS. WINTER also. The reason whereof was, because they observed that in his prayer he was more earnest in praying for the spiritual and eternal welfare of her soul, than for her bodily health.

When they were returned home, MRS. WINTER asked her husband what he thought of her? He answered, 'She will die.' And this he said, because when in prayer he would have begged of God to restore her to health, he could not do it; but could only pray for her eternal happiness. It is the observation of a Reverend Divine: 'That when God intends not to hear, He lays the key of prayer out of the way, as being loath that such precious breath as that of prayer is, should be without full and clear success.'

At length MRS. JONES finding herself very weak, sent for MR. WINTER to pray with her, and after prayer she said unto him: 'Sir, I fear you love me not so much as formerly. God heard your prayers for me when I was dying at Kilkenny, but now you do not pray so earnestly for my life as you did then.' 'No (said he) I neither do, nor can do it, though I love you as well as ever: For when I would pray for your life, my tongue is turned to pray for your eternal welfare. Therefore I believe that you are not a woman for this world.' And it pleased God shortly to take her to Himself.

At another time MRS. WINTER's sister going for England, left her only son with her; after a while the child fell into an high fever, and one morning the maid, with whom the child lay, came to her mistress and told her, she feared the child had the plague, for that he had many spots in his bosom; and the plague, at this time was in Dublin. MRS. WINTER presently sent for a Doctor, who, when he had seen him, said, he much feared the child's life. Hereupon MRS. WINTER went to her husband in his study, requesting him that he would be earnest with God for the child's

life. At noon, when her husband came down, we asked him, what he thought of the child? He bade her not trouble herself, for the child would live: Before the next day the child began to amend, and within a few days was perfectly well.

Whilst they were in Dublin MRS. WINTER's sister's husband, being upon his occasions in London, fell dangerously sick; his Physicians after a time gave him up for dead. Another of MRS. WINTER's sisters wrote her word of it; adding, that she believed before that letter could come to her hands he would be dead and buried. As soon as they received it, his wife desired that that afternoon might be set apart to seek GOD; and accordingly some Ministers and Christians were invited to meet together for that end: When the time was come, MRS. WINTER requested her husband to come away, for the company were met: He had bidden her go before; for he must endeavour to know of the LORD whether he was yet living or no: When some of the Ministers had prayed, DR. WINTER came in. They prayed with submission, that if he were yet in the land of the living, the LORD would be pleased to be his Physician. But in the close of the day, when DR. WINTER came to pray, he spake with confidence, that he was alive. When DR. WINTER was risen from his knees, he went to his sister-in-law, and took her by the hand, saying: 'Be of good comfort, for your husband is alive, and shall recover, and you shall see him again with joy.' She crying out aloud, said, 'Ah, brother, I fear he is dead: Do you think he is alive?' 'I know (said he) that he is alive,' and repeated over his former words: And accordingly in their next letters they heard of his recovery.

The last time the soldiers pulled the Parliament in pieces, DR. WINTER and his friends in Dublin were in great fears of the confusions that were like to follow: Whereupon he kept weekly Fasts with his congregation for a great while together. And one time as he was praying, in imitation of ABRAHAM's praying for Sodom, he used such like expres-

sions: 'LORD, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty thousand righteous within these three kingdoms: Wilt thou also destroy, and not spare these nations for fifty thousand righteous that are therein?' And when he came to the last number of ten thousand, as he kneeled against a post in the room, he saw a great shining light about him, and heard perfectly a voice, saying; 'The nations shall be spared for ten thousand righteous persons' sake.'

Upon this he turned his prayer into praises and thanksgivings, insomuch as all the company could not but take notice of it, though none of them heard the voice but himself only. DR. WINTER afterwards told his wife, that he perceived a voice might be spoken to one in a room where many were, and yet none else hear it. And when he lay upon his death-bed, his wife asked him again about it, and he said that he did as certainly and plainly hear it, as he heard her then speak.

After he returned to England, he, with his wife, sojourned for a month in DR. DRAKE's house, in which time his second daughter fell sick of the twisting of her guts. She lay in great torments from Monday till Saturday night, and the Doctors had little hopes of her life. On Saturday in the evening DR. WINTER came in, and meeting her sister, inquired how she did? Her sister answered, she was near death; for that the Doctors having prescribed something to be given her in a spoon, her teeth were so set that her aunt and she had much ado to open them to put it into her mouth: 'But (said she) Sir, what do you think of her?' 'Give me (said he) a candle that I may go into my chamber, and anon I will tell you whether she shall live or die.' When he came down, she met him at the foot of the stairs, and asked him, What he thought of her now? He answered, 'Your sister will live.' And so going up into his chamber, he spake to his wife, and bid her use all means for her recovery; for (said he) 'She must not die at this time.' His wife begged of him not to be so confident, for there were

no hopes of her recovery ; yet he told her mother and aunt, that she should recover. His wife was much troubled at it, notwithstanding her many experiences. But the next day signs of recovery began to appear, and within a little space she was perfectly well.

Other instances of his power and prevalency in prayer might be given ; but these may suffice, as evidently demonstrating, that the LORD our GOD “ never saith to the seed of JACOB, Seek ye my face in vain.”

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
SOME EMINENT PERSONS
OF
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

I. *Of* MR. HUGH KENNEDY.

HUGH KENNEDY, though he was no Minister, yet he was an eminent instrument of promoting the Gospel in the place where he lived. He was Provost of Ayr. Once when the merchant ships which belonged to that town were at sea, amongst whom was his son JOHN, he went early one morning, before break of day, to the house of his familiar friend JOHN STEWARD, desiring him to rise and go with him to a private room; whereat he was exceedingly astonished: But whilst he delayed, he said to him, 'It is no time to linger; let us go pray; for my son, with the rest of our friends now at sea, are at this very time upon the nick of perishing:' And after he had spent some time in prayer, he arose cheerfully, and said, 'Now they are safe.' JOHN STEWARD, who had written this down, with the day and hour, at the return of the ship particularly inquired, and found that it exactly answered all circumstances; and that in that very hour they were in appearance past hope of safety, and, by an extraordinary Providence, delivered.

One day, being for many hours alone in prayer, he came forth with an unusual cheerfulness; and his friends inquiring the reason, he said, 'It was no wonder, for he had that day obtained mercy of God for himself and all his.' Which also came to pass, for there was not one of his children, but was eminently holy. Whilst he was dying, a Minister said, 'You have cause, Sir, to be assured that the angels are waiting to convey your soul into ABRAHAM'S bosom.' He answered, 'I am sure thereof; and if the walls of this house could speak, they could tell how many sweet days I have had in secret communion with God, and how familiarly He hath dealt with my soul.'

The morning before God took him, having (as he used) eaten an egg, he said to his daughter, 'I am yet hungry, bring me another egg;' but presently after falling into a deep meditation, after he had mused a while, he said, 'Hold, daughter, hold; my Master calls me.' Whereupon he called for a Bible, but finding his sight gone, he said, 'Turn me to the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and set my finger at these words, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall separate me from the love of God, which is in CHRIST JESUS, my LORD." Now (said he) is my finger upon them?' And when they told him it was, without speaking any more, he said, 'Now God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my LORD JESUS CHRIST this night.' And so he gave up the GHOST.

II. *Of* MR. PATRICK SIMPSON.

MR. PATRICK SIMPSON was some time Minister at Cramond, and afterwards translated to Stirling. In his youth he attained to great exactness in the languages, and read many authors; and being told by some, that they wondered why he spent so much time in reading Pagan authors, he answered, 'That he purposed to dedicate all these

jewels, which he borrowed from the Egyptians, towards the building the House of God.'

His life was most exemplary for piety, and faithfulness in the service of his Master, which preached no less in that part of the country where he lived, than did his doctrine. His wife, a gracious woman, and the wife of his youth, with whom he lived in great love, fell sick, which proved her last sickness. In her weakness she was sorely assaulted by SATAN, who suggested to her, that she should be given over into his hands, and it ended in a visible distraction, which for a time grew upon her: So that, most unlike her former practice, she would break forth into dreadful and horrid expressions, and were most violent on a Sabbath morning, when Mr. SIMPSON was going to preach; whereupon, with a heavy countenance, he stood silent for a time, and at last kneeled down and prayed: After which, turning to the company, he said, 'He was sure that they who were now witnesses, should yet see a gracious change, and that the Devil's malice against that poor woman should have a shameful foil.'

Her distraction continued till Tuesday, August 9, which morning, at the very dawning of it, he went into his garden and shut the door, where, for many hours, he was alone; but a godly woman, one HELEN GARNER, wife to one of the Bailiffs of Stirling, who had been with his wife all night, apprehending that Mr. Simpson might much hurt himself by grief and fasting, did climb over into the garden. As she came near the place where Mr. SIMPSON was, she was terrified with an extraordinary noise, which made her fall to the ground. It seemed to her like a mighty rushing of multitudes running together, and withal she heard such a melodious sound, as made her judge that it was more than human: Whereupon she prayed to God to pardon her rashness, which her affection to that man of God had carried her to. Afterwards, going forwards, she found him lying upon the ground. She earnestly entreated him to tell her what he had from God. He (when she had promised not to reveal it so long as he lived) said, 'O

what am I, that the holy ministering spirit should be sent by the LORD to deliver a message to me ! And he told her, that he had a vision of angels, who with an audible voice gave him an answer from the LORD concerning his wife's condition. Returning into his house, he said to all that were present, 'Be of good comfort, for before ten hours be past, this brand shall be plucked out of the fire.' After, he prayed by his wife's bedside, and whilst he was mentioning JACOB's wrestling in prayer, she sat upright in the bed, and casting by the curtain, said, 'Thou art this day JACOB, who hast wrestled, and also prevailed : And now God hath made good his word which he spake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the hands of SATAN, and he shall have no more power over me.' This interruption made him silent for a time ; but afterwards, with great melting of heart, he proceeded in prayer, and magnified the riches of God's love towards her : And from that hour she spake most Christianly and comfortably even to her death. MR. SIMPSON lived till March, 1618.



III. *Of* MR. ANDREW STEWARD.

THERE was in Ireland an exercise held, whereunto a great multitude assembled, and while MR. ANDREW STEWARD, Minister of Dunagor, was feeding his flock in a large place, (for the numerousness of the hearers imposed a necessity upon him to preach in the field,) an horrid black cloud hung directly over their heads, which, to all present, threatened a strange pouring down of rain ; yea, some drops began to fall : But MR. STEWARD, being much enlarged in his own spirit, craved their patience whilst he retired a little to pray. Whilst he was praying, it was observed that the cloud removed about half a mile off to the southward, and there fell so mighty a rain as caused the brooks so to swell, that some who came later than the rest, could not get over ; but where they were assembled there fell not a drop, so

that he had an opportunity to proceed to the close, to the great benefit of the hearers.

In the year 1634, MR. STEWARD being invited to the funeral of that man of God, MR. JOSIAH WELCH, stood silent for a time at the grave as a serious observer of that sad dispensation. Some that stood by said, 'God knows who will be next;' and when none answered, he said, 'I do know;' and so turning away, he went home to Dunagor, and entering into the Church, bolted the door to him, where he continued about two hours, and then going home to his house, fell ill, and was buried that day month.

When his wife came home, whom he had left with MR. WELCH's widow, she asked him what he had been doing? He answered, 'I have been taking my leave of the Church of Dunagor, and I was there calling the stones and timber to witness, that in my short time I had laboured to be faithful; and that, according to my light, I have revealed the whole counsel of God to the people.' After he had lain about fourteen days, an English Minister came to visit him, and said, 'I hope, Sir, you do not now repent that you have been faithful?' He answered, 'I am sorry for nothing but that I was too long before I began, (he meant his resisting for several years a call to the Ministry,) and I will tell you a strange thing: These last seven years there hath not one day passed, without thoughts of death, and renewed submission to the will of God therein. Yea, this made me neglect my body, as if it had been mire in the street.'

The night wherein he died, sundry Christians were with him, when, for a long time, he fell into a deep silence, which ended with heavy groanings. One desired to know what it was that troubled him, but he refused to tell. Being much urged, he at length said, 'I tell you that my hair stands on end to foresee what is coming upon these lands.' And being farther pressed he said, 'The bloody wars of Germany cannot be balanced with the wars of these three kingdoms.' 'What say you, Sir?' said one of the company. To whom he answered, 'The dead bodies of

many thousands, who now despise the glorious Gospel, shall lie unburied as dung upon the earth.' 'What then,' said some, 'shall become of us and our posterity?' He lifted up his voice, and said, 'He that is for the sword, to the sword! He that is for captivity, to captivity! And he that is for famine, to famine! For God shall be avenged upon these lands!' And when one said 'Is there no remedy?' He cried thrice, 'No remedy, no remedy, no remedy!' and so held his peace. And a while after he said, 'The broken Covenant of Scotland must be renewed; the formality of Ireland must be purged; the prodigality of England removed; and the sons of SAUL must be hung up before the sun.' Of which last words none knew the meaning.

Some of his own parish being present, asked what he would say to them; to whom he replied, 'Woe to thee, Dunagor, for the nettles and the long grass shall be in greater plenty in thee, than ever were people to hear the word of God.' And three years together after the late rebellion, this was fully accomplished.

Some asked him if he would have his children come to him? He answered, 'No, he had done with them.' And when they mentioned one of his daughters to him, he desired them to forbear, saying, 'She shall see glorious days after all this.' Then having taken his wife by the hand, (who had laid-in but four days, and now crept out of her bed to give and take a long farewell,) he said, 'Thou hast in faithfulness suffered many things with me in my pilgrimage, and now wherewith shall I comfort thee, my love? [He left her with four children, under much debt.] A Father to the fatherless, and a Judge to the widow, is God in his holy habitation. As God is God, thou shalt never want, nor none of thine; but in all the sad days that are coming, you shall be a wonder of mercy in every place whither you are carried, and not a hair of your heads shall fall to the ground.' This was fully accomplished, to the conviction and edification of many which saw it.

IV. *Of* MR. DAVIDSON.

MR. DAVIDSON, Minister of the Gospel at Salt-Preston, had an extraordinary prophetic spirit, and was eminently zealous and faithful. Whilst he was Minister at Salt-Preston, the building of the Church was much desired by him, which also he much advanced out of his own private interest. The Lord NEWBATTLE (who had great authority in that parish) promising to promote it, from which yet he drew back, so that the work ceased; whereupon MR. DAVIDSON said to him, ‘These walls that were begun to be built shall stand as a witness against you, that ere long God shall root you out, and your estate out of this parish, so that you shall not have a piece of land in the same.’ This, shortly after, had a visible accomplishment.

In an Assembly of the Church, MR. JOHN SPOTSWOOD and MR. LAW had a process put in against them for some gross misdemeanors, where MR. DAVIDSON, finding a readiness in the Assembly to acquit them, by reason of their good parts, he did with earnestness press their deposition; but being crossed therein, he said, ‘You will needs spare these two men; the time is coming wherein they will trample upon your necks:’ Which had, shortly after, its accomplishment.

Being at dinner with MR. BRUCE, who was then in great favour with the King, in returning thanks after meat, and had this expression: ‘LORD, thy servant here is a great favourite at Court, and had in much respect; but he shall, ere long, be as much persecuted as he is now favoured, and shall go down the streets when many who now esteem him greatly, will not vouchsafe to give him a salutation;’ which afterwards came to pass.

At another time, MR. ROBERT BRUCE and he dining together at the house of a magistrate at Edinburgh, whilst he was giving thanks, he said, ‘LORD, this good man for thy sake hath respect to thy servants; but he little knows that within a short time he must carry us two to prison:’

Which words did much trouble that honest magistrate ; but afterward it came exactly to pass.

A gentleman nearly related to a great family in that parish where MR. DAVIDSON was Minister, a violent hater of piety, did upon that account beat a poor honest man that lived there, having not the least shadow of provocation ; and among many sore strokes, he gave him one upon the back, using these words, ‘ Take this for MR. DAVIDSON’S sake.’ After which, this honest man was forced for a time to keep his bed, complaining most of the stroke upon his back. The Sabbath following, in the close of his sermons, MR. DAVIDSON, speaking about the oppression of the godly, did particularly instance in that late insolence : And then added, ‘ He who hath done this, before a few days be past, God shall give him such a stroke, as all the monarchs in the earth cannot do ;’ and the Saturday following, as this gentleman stood before his door, he was stricken dead with a thunderbolt, and had all his bones broken.

This MR. DAVIDSON, not long before his death, occasionally meeting with MR. JOHN KER, a young gentleman who was lately come out of France, and had then no thoughts of entering into the Ministry, and was in a very courtly dress, MR. DAVIDSON solemnly charged him to put off his scarlet cloak and his gilt sword, ‘ For you are the man (said he) who must succeed me in the Ministry at this place.’ This much astonished the gentleman for the present ; yet did he obey, and immediately succeeded him.



V. *Of* MR. ROBERT BRUCE.

WHILST MR. ROBERT BRUCE was Minister at Edinburgh, he shone as a great light through the whole land : The power and efficacy of God’S SPIRIT most sensibly accompanying the word which he preached. He was a terror to evil-doers, and the authority of God did so appear upon him, with such a majesty in his countenance, as forced fear

and reverence from the greatest of the land. Yea, his carriage had such an awful impression upon King JAMES himself, that before many, he gave this testimony of him, ‘That MR. BRUCE was worthy of half his kingdom.’

He was a man that had much inward trouble about his own spiritual condition, and had been oft tempted by SATAN to question that fundamental truth, whether there was a GOD? This cost him many days and nights wrestling before he could clear it up to his own soul, which occasioned him, when he came into the pulpit, after a short silence (which was his usual way) to say, ‘I think it is a great matter to believe that there is a GOD.’ It was known to his friends, what extraordinary confirmation he had hereof from the LORD; what familiarity he attained in his secret converses with GOD.

The great success of his Ministry at Edinburgh, Inverness, and other places whither Providence called him, is known to many. Whilst he was confined at Inverness, that poor dark country was marvellously enlightened by him, and many were brought home to CHRIST by his Ministry, and a seed was sown, which was not worn out for many years.

MR. BRUCE had the spirit of discerning in a great measure, and did foretel many things: Divers distracted persons, and others who were past hope of recovery by sickness, were brought to him, who by his prayers were fully recovered. He was a great wrestler with GOD, and had more than ordinary familiarity with Him.

A little before his death, when through weakness he kept his chamber, there was a meeting of Ministers, who hearing that he was in town, came to him, and gave him an account of those times: MR. BRUCE went to prayer, and therein spread before the LORD the substance of their discourse; there was such an extraordinary motion upon all present, and so sensible a pouring down of the SPIRIT, that they could hardly contain themselves; yea, there was an universal motion upon others who were in other parts of the house, though they knew not the cause of it: And MR.

WEEMS of Lothaker, being occasionally present, at his going away said, ‘How strange a man is this; for he draws down the SPIRIT of GOD upon us all, by knocking his fingers upon the table;’ which indeed he many times did.



VI. *Of* MR. ROBERT BLAIR.

MR. ROBERT BLAIR in his younger days out-ran many others in his studies. When he first began to preach, by a remarkable Providence, he had MR. BRUCE to his hearer; and indeed, he was desirous to have the judgment of so great a man, to whom MR. BRUCE said, ‘I found your sermon very well polished, and digested; but there is one thing that I missed in it, namely, the SPIRIT of GOD, that I found not.’ This made a great impression upon MR. BLAIR, and did him much good all his life after. For divers years he was a Regent in the College of Glasgow, where he made it his work to train up those under his charge in the study of godliness, as well as human learning.

When he was put from the College, he went to his brother Minister at Dumbarton, to whom he confessed, that by the way, he could not but sing for joy in the remembrance of God’s helping him to be instrumental for the good of the young men committed to his charge. Afterwards he went into Ireland, having a call to Bangor, and upon the sight of land, his heart leaped in him for joy, so that he was scarce able to bear it. When he came near Bangor, he had a strong impression that the Dean of Bangor was sick unto death, which at first he rejected as an impertinent suggestion; but going forward, it was with such power impressed upon his spirit, as forced him to take notice of it. When he came thither he found indeed that the Dean was sick, and though he had been an ill man, yet he made MR. BLAIR very welcome, and encouraged him to hold on in his way, and told him that he was to succeed him in that

charge: Yea', he spake in a strain so different from what was his usual manner, that a gentlewoman, standing by, said to some others, that an angel spake out of the Dean's bed to MR. BLAIR, thinking that it could not proceed from such a man.

After some time MR. BLAIR with some of his worthy brethren, were silenced by Bishop ECKLIN, who in the Church of Bangor himself pronounced the sentence; whereupon MR. BLAIR rose up publicly in the congregation, and with great authority cited the Bishop to appear before the Tribunal of CHRIST, to answer for what he was doing contrary to the light of his own conscience; whereupon the Bishop was so astonished that he cried out, 'I appeal from the Tribunal of God's Justice to the Throne of his Mercy:' To whom MR. BLAIR replied, 'Sir, your appeal is rejected: For you know that what you are doing is directly against your conscience: Which hath made you to bear witness to us as the servants of JESUS CHRIST.' A few months after, the Bishop fell sick; the Physicians inquiring of him what was the cause, he could only say, 'My conscience,' and died.

MR. BLAIR was by his brethren sent into England to petition the King for their liberty: And as he was upon the way, he was taken with an extreme fit of the stone, which made him lie upon his horse's neck, not being able to sit upright. This much troubled him, being a hinderance to him in so important a business: Hereupon he applied himself to God in prayer, and immediately after trying if possibly he could lift up his back, he found his pain quite gone, and had perfect ease; nor did it return upon him for two years after.

A few days after in the same journey, his horse fell very lame, which much troubled him, having no opportunity to provide himself with another: And hereupon also he made his addresses to God by prayer, which the LORD graciously inclined his ear to, so that his horse was (to his amazement) perfectly cured, and without halting at all carried him to London.

When he came to London, he endeavoured what he could, but could not get access to the King: Yea, some that were his friends at Court, assured him that he could have no hope to speed therein, yet he resolved not to give over, but to cast the business upon the LORD; for whose service only he was importuning for an open door. One day going to Greenwich, where the Court then was, and being weary of waiting without success, he retired into the park to pray, and after much wrestling with the LORD, he had so clear a return that he could not but be assured his way should be successful: Yet, the appearance thereof being so unlikely, he, in a humble manner, begged a sign of the LORD; immediately after the wind blowing hard, so great a calm suddenly followed, that not the least plant did move or stir. Thence he went back to London, and within a few days had his petition presented to the King, who accepted of it, and in St. James's Park called for him, and with his own hand did not only sign it, but wrote in the margin these words, directed to the Lord Deputy of Ireland, 'Indulge the education of these Ministers; for they are Scotchmen.'

Whilst he was in England he had a discovery concerning the death of his wife, and of her lying in such a bed, and of a Christian friend being by her, who was his particular acquaintance: When he came home he found his wife well, but a little after she fell sick, and died in the same bed, with that friend sitting by her, and with all other particular circumstances.



VII. *Of* MR. JOHN WELSH.

MR. JOHN WELSH was not long since Minister of Kircudbright, and afterwards translated to the Church of Ayr, whom MR. RUTHERFORD calleth, an heavenly, prophetic, and apostolic man, assuring us, that of each twenty-four hours, he spent eight in prayer: Yea, he spent

many days and nights in fasting and prayer for the afflicted condition of the church, and for the sufferings of the Reformed churches abroad. It was his usual manner in the coldest Winter nights to rise for prayer; and oft-times his wife hath risen to seek him, and found him lying on the ground weeping, and wrestling with the LORD: And he would be much of the night in the Church of Ayr upon that account. One time especially she found him overcharged with sorrow, whereupon he told her, That he had that to press him, which she had not, namely, the charge of three thousand souls which he must answer for, whilst he knew not how it was with many of them. And at another time, when she found him alone, his spirit was overwhelmed with anguish and grief, and when she asked him the reason of it? He answered, That the times that were coming upon Scotland for the contempt of the Gospel, would be very heavy, but she should not live to see them.

Whilst he was a prisoner in Blackness he wrote to a Christian lady, That JESUS CHRIST is a King, and hath a visible kingdom in the world, even his church, which is as free to keep its Courts, and to exert discipline, by virtue of an intrinsic power from CHRIST, as any kingdom on the earth: And in the close of his letter, he foretold that judgment was coming upon Scotland, first by an intestine sword, and then by the sword of a stranger, and that there should be a great slaughter, both of great men and mean; which many lived to see.

JOHN STEWARD, of Ayr, coming to visit him in prison, found him in a more than ordinary way troubled, and inquiring of him what was the reason of it? He said, 'JOHN, you should not be here, go homé to Ayr, for the plague of God is broken in upon that place, and cause HUGH KENNEDY to convene the people in the streets, and pray together, and the LORD shall hear HUGH KENNEDY, and remove that stroke.' This at first astonished JOHN, and made him question the truth hereof; but at his return he found it in every thing as this man of GOD had foretold.

The King changing the sentence of death into banish-

ment, he went over into France, where, in a short time, he learned the French language. MR. TROCHIG, in his *Comment upon the Ephesians*, relates, that being called to preach at Salmurz, before one of the most learned auditories in all France, he performed it with such boldness and authority, as though he had been before a mean congregation. TROCHIG being astonished at it, asked him whence he had that confidence in preaching before such a judicious congregation in a strange tongue? To which he answered, in an humble and modest manner, as one rather dejected than elated, that when he considered his being before the LORD, and that he was delivering his message, he could not regard the persons, either of the great or mean.

Whilst he was Minister at St. John de Angeli, a Protestant town in France, where his Ministry was blessed with great success, the Civil Wars breaking out, that city was besieged by the Popish party. The town being ready to be taken, the enemies having raised a battery, and made a considerable breach in the wall, MR. WELSH, being informed hereof, (who had much encouraged the citizens by telling them that their enemies should not prevail against them,) went himself with the cannonier up to the walls, and desired him to charge such a piece of cannon, and shoot, for GOD would direct that shot and cause it to prosper, which accordingly was done, and to the astonishment of the spectators, it dismounted the enemy's cannon from that battery, and the LORD was pleased so to order things afterwards, that the King agreed with the citizens upon good terms.

The Sabbath following, some of that place, fearing MR. WELSH's danger, did seriously desire he would not preach that day, for that the Court was there; but by no entreaty would he be hindered from the discharge of his duty, telling them, that he would adventure to preach GOD's word, and trust the LORD with what concerned himself. He had that day a very great auditory, both of friends and others, who came upon the fame of such a man's preaching; but whilst he was in his sermon, a great man of the Court

was sent with some of the King's own guard, to bring him presently before the King. Whilst he was entering the Church, with some difficulty, by reason of the crowd, MR. WELSH turning himself towards the door, desired the people to make way for one of the great Peers of France: And when he was come near the pulpit to execute his commission, MR. WELSH with great authority spake to him, and in the name of his Master, JESUS CHRIST, charged him that he should not disturb the worship of GOD; wherewith the nobleman was so affrighted, that he fell a trembling, yea, was forced to crouch down, and make no farther disturbance.

The sermon being ended, MR. WELSH, with great submission went to the King, who was much incensed, and with a frowning countenance, asked who he was, and how he durst be so bold as to preach heresy so near his person? To which, with due reverence bowing himself, he answered, 'I am, Sir, a servant and Minister of JESUS CHRIST, whose truth I preached this day; which if your Majesty did rightly know, you would have come to it yourself, and heard it: And for my doctrine, I did this day preach,

'*First*, That man, by nature, is in a lost condition; and that, by his own power, he is not able to help himself.

'*Secondly*, That there is no salvation, by our own merits; but by JESUS CHRIST, and his merit alone.

'*Thirdly*, I preached this day the just liberties of the kingdom of France; that your Majesty oweth obedience to CHRIST only, who is Head of the Church: And that the Pope, as he is an enemy to CHRIST and his truth, so also to the Kings of the earth, whom he keepeth under slavery to his usurped power.' The King, for a time, being silent and astonished, turned to some about him and said, 'Surely this is a man of GOD.' After he communed with him, and dismissed him with great respect.

The year following, the differences continuing between the King and Protestants, that city was again besieged, taken, and in part plundered, as MR. WELSH did publicly foretel. At which time the King passed a solemn order,

that none should in the least wrong MR. WELSH, or anything that belonged to him under the highest penalties, and afterwards he gave him a safe-conduct to transport himself into England, where he died : KING JAMES refusing to give him leave to return into his own country, though he was earnestly petitioned by his wife to grant that favour to her husband for his health's sake. During his sickness he was so filled and overcome with the enjoyment of God that he was sometimes overheard in prayer to use these words, ' LORD, hold thy hand ; it is enough : Thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more.'

Whilst he was Minister at Ayr, there came two men with packs of cloth to the town's end from a neighbour town, in time when a plague was in some places of the country, yet the town whence they came was not at all suspected to be infected. The sentry at the bridge stopped them till the Magistrate came, and though he could not disallow the pass, yet would not the Magistrate suffer them to come in till he had sent for MR. WELSH. A little after, MR. WELSH coming, the Magistrate said to him, ' Sir, here are two men come from such a place. We have heard of no plague there ; besides they have a pass from known men. What would you advise us to do ?' MR. WELSH answered ' Nothing for the present ;' but uncovering his head in the midst of the company that followed him, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, (yet without speaking,) near half a quarter of an hour, at last he said, ' BAILIE, cause these men to be gone ; for if God be in heaven, the plague is in these packs.' The men going away, opened their packs at Cumnock, which so infected the town, that all the inhabitants died, not one being left to bury the dead.

One night, being under an extraordinary pressure of spirit to go and pour forth his soul unto God, he left his wife in bed, and going out into a garden, spent most of the night in prayer and praise. His wife, missing him so long at length went to seek him ; and not finding him in his ordinary place, she went into other gardens by such passages as she knew. At last she heard a voice, and drawing near,

she heard him speak these words with great fervency, accompanied with a flood of tears, ‘O God! wilt thou not give me Scotland? O God! wilt thou not give me Scotland?’ She being afraid to interrupt him, went home and heard not the close. At length he came home, and going to bed, his wife mildly reproved him for his unmercifulness to himself. Then she asked him what it was that he was saying? for she told him she heard him. ‘Well, (said he,) you had better have been in your bed. I tell you I have endured a great fight for Scotland this night; and hardly could I prevail that a remnant should be reserved. Yet God will be gracious.’

Afterwards he arose another night, (as his frequent manner was,) but went not out into the garden, but into another chamber, where he so laboured and groaned, that his wife, hearing him, went several times to draw him to bed; but he stayed his time and then returned. His wife, with a modest expostulation, blamed him for tarrying so long: ‘Hold thy peace,’ said he, ‘it will be well with us; but I shall never preach another sermon in Ayr.’ Then falling asleep, before he awaked a messenger came who was sent to carry him prisoner to Edinburgh Castle.

Whilst he was prisoner there, the Lord UCHILTRY was Governor of the Castle, whose sister was MR. WELSH’s mother-in-law. He caused MR. WELSH to sup with him one night at his own table, where also were several other gentlemen, and among them a Popish youth. MR. WELSH laboured to entertain the company with edifying discourse, which all attended to, save this young Papist, who, with laughter and derision, sought to silence him. After supper, the guests sitting still, this youth stood up at the lower end of the table, and whilst MR. WELSH proceeded to gracious discourses, the youth grew to that insolency as with his finger to point at him, and to make wry mouths at him, whereby he so grieved that holy man, that on a sudden he was forced to silence.

The whole company, that were much delighted with his discourses, were silent also; but a while after, MR. WELSH

brake forth into these words: ‘Gentlemen, the SPIRIT of God is provoked against us, and I shall entreat you not to be afraid to see what God will do amongst you before you rise from the table; for he will strike some of you with death before you go hence.’ All were astonished, waiting with fear to see the issue; and while all men feared themselves, except this insolent youth, he fell down dead among them.

One day, as MR. WELSH looked out of his window in the Castle, he saw the Governor, to whom he said, ‘God save you, my Lord.’ The Governor asked him how he did, and wherein he might serve him? ‘In nothing,’ said MR. WELSH, ‘except you would carry a petition to his Majesty for my liberty to preach the Gospel.’ ‘I willingly will,’ said the Governor, ‘therefore send it to me.’ ‘Nay,’ said MR. WELSH, ‘I am your kinsman, and love you so well as to warn you not to undertake it, except you resolve to deal truly in delivering it, and in getting me an answer.’ ‘I will bear the blame,’ said the Governor, ‘if I do it not.’ So he undertook it; but when he came to the King, finding him in a great passion upon some other occasion, he judged it not meet at that time to present it; and afterwards neglected, and at last quite forgot it, for which his heart smiting him, he durst hardly be seen of MR. WELSH for three months after. Yet at length he came to the same place where MR. WELSH at first called to him. MR. WELSH asked him how he did, and what was become of his petition? The Governor being surprised, answered, ‘I delivered it to his Majesty; but he being in a passion, it seems that it was neglected.’ ‘Nay, my Lord,’ said MR. WELSH, ‘you should not lie to God and me: I know that you delivered it not; and I am sorry, my Lord, for your lot. I warned you not to be false to God; and now I tell you, God shall take your estate and honours in Scotland from you, and give them to your neighbour.’ This much troubled the Lord UCHILTRY, but so it came to pass; for he was forced to quit all, and to give both his estate and honours to JAMES, the son of Captain JAMES, the second brother, who was the last of that house.

Supplement

TO THE

CHRISTIAN LIBRARY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN the Proposals for publishing the present edition of the CHRISTIAN LIBRARY were first issued, it was calculated that the work would extend to thirty volumes. The whole, however, has been comprised in twenty-eight volumes and a half. To fulfil the original conditions of publication, and preserve some valuable tracts from oblivion, the following Supplement has been added. It consists of abridgments from various Authors, made by MR. WESLEY, at different periods, and published in a separate form. Several of them are now very scarce, having been long out of print.

THOMAS JACKSON

LONDON, September 25, 1826.

THE LIFE

OF

MONSIEUR DE RENTY.

CHAPTER I.

Of his Birth, Marriage, and general Way of Life.

1. MR. DE RENTY descended from one of the most noble houses of Artois. He was the only son of CHARLES DE RENTY, and was born in the year 1611, at Beny in Low Normandy. There he was brought up till six or seven years of age, and then by his mother carried to Paris where he lived with her about two years, till he was put into the College of Navarre; whence he was sent to Caen, till at seventeen he was removed to an Academy, or School of genteel exercises at Paris. He was soon accomplished in all the exercises there taught: But what then pleased him most was, the mathematics. For these he slighted all sorts of diversions, till he understood them perfectly, and composed some books therein.

2. About this time a stationer whom he used, presented him with *Kempis of the Imitation of CHRIST*; and some time after pressed him to read it, which he had no sooner done, than he felt new thoughts and affections, and resolved seriously to pursue the one thing needful, the working out his salvation. And ever after he so esteemed that book, that he always carried it about him, and made use of it on all occasions.

3. At the age of twenty-two, he married ELIZABETH DE BALSAC, daughter of the COUNT of GRAVILLE, by

whom he had five children, four of whom (two sons and two daughters) survived him.

4. Having lived to the age of twenty-seven years, it pleased God to touch his heart more closely ; and this time he marked as the beginning of his entire change, and perfect consecration to God's service : In order whereto, he was well convinced of the necessity of a good guide ; and God provided him one, such as his need required, a person of deep learning, of great piety, and well-experienced in the direction of souls, who had the conduct of him for twelve years. By his advice he withdrew altogether from Court, he renounced all visits of pure compliment, and all unnecessary employments, to give himself up to those which might glorify God, and help his neighbour.

5. Every day before dinner, and again in the evening, he made an exact search into his smallest faults. He communicated three or four times a week, having ever an incredible esteem of the holy Eucharist, blessing and praising God for its institution, and exciting all men to do the same. He was used to say, ' That the great design of God in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of his SON, was to convey unto us his SPIRIT, to be unto us Life eternal ; and in order to cause us to die to ourselves, and live thereby, he gave him to us in this holy Sacrament, and with him all the blessings of grace, to dispose us for those of glory.'

6. One day in a week, he visited the poor sick people of the great hospital *de Dieu*. Another, those of his own parish ; a third, the prisoners ; and in the rest, he used to meet at assemblies of piety. He assembled his own family every evening to prayers, and discoursed to them every Saturday on the Gospel for the next day. And of his children he took more especial care to engrave deeply in them the fear of God, and to convince them that the customs and maxims of the world were utterly irreconcilable to the Gospel of CHRIST.

7. The order he kept in his journeys was this. In the morning, before setting out, they joined in prayer ; after

setting out, the first thing done was, the saying the *Itinerarium*; next was, the singing the *Litanies of our LORD*; then followed some meditation, and after that a part of the *Divine Office*. This being done, he entertained the company with some good discourse. Beholding the spacious extent of the country, he would speak of the immensity of God. Upon the presenting of any beautiful object, he would discourse of the beauty of God, and in so lively a manner as to touch the very heart. Approaching near the place where they were to dine, he began his self-examination: And being come thither, as soon as out of his coach, he went to the Church, and next, if there were any in the place, to the hospital. Being at his inn, the first thing he did in his chamber was, to cast himself on his knees, and to pray with great affection for all persons that entered that place, and for pardon of all disorders that had been there committed. If he saw any thing offensive written on the walls or chimneys, he defaced it, and in the place wrote something of instruction. And always before his departure he endeavoured to give some good advice to the servants of the house, or to such poor as he could meet with, that so he might not pass through any place without doing some good there. After dinner, when in his coach again, he took a little time for recollection, then sung the Vespers; which done, he wished the company to use some useful conversation. About four they sung the evening Psalms; afterward he applied himself to mental prayer; and being come to his inn, his exercises were the same with those of the morning.

1. A fuller account of his general way of life he wrote to his second Director, as follows:

‘I have delayed some days after the command I had, to set down the employing of my time, for the better discovering of some things therein; but I find nothing there of strict order, because all consists in following the order of God, which causes in a manner continually different things, though all upon the same foundation.

‘For my outward behaviour, I usually rise at five; that

is, after part of the night spent in prayer. At my awakening, I consider myself as nothing, before the Majesty of GOD. I unite me to his SON and SPIRIT. Being risen, I cast myself down, and adore the blessing of the Incarnation, which gives us access to GOD ; and deliver up myself to the HOLY JESUS, to be entered into his SPIRIT.

‘ Being clothed, I go into the chapel, where I cast myself down, and adore GOD, abasing me before him, and making me the most little, most naked, most empty of myself that I can ; and I hold me there by faith, having recourse to his SON and to his HOLY SPIRIT, that whatsoever is his pleasure may be done by me.

‘ Between six and seven I read two Chapters of the New Testament bare-headed and on my knees. I then give place to my affairs ; but if there be no business urgent, I prostrate myself before GOD till I go to Church. There I stay till half an hour past eleven, except when we dine some poor people, then I return at eleven. Before dinner I examine myself, and use some prayers for the Church, and for the Propagation of the Faith. I dine at twelve, and in the while have something read. Half an hour past twelve, I spend an hour with them that have business with me. Then I go out whither the order of GOD shall direct. Some days are assigned for certain exercises ; others are not. But be it as it will, I endeavour to spend about evening an hour in devotion. About even, after I have used some prayers, we go to supper. After supper I instruct my children. At nine are family prayers, after which I meditate till ten ; and then going to my chamber, and recommending myself to my GOD, after some short prayers, I endeavour to repose.

‘ As to the order of my interior, I have not (as I may say) any ; for since I left my *Breviary* all my forms have left me, and now instead of serving me as means to go to GOD, they would only be hinderances. I bear in me ordinarily an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the most Holy Trinity, which elevates me to a simple view of GOD, and with that I do all that his Provi-

dence enjoins me, not regarding any thing for their greatness or littleness, but only the order of God, and the glory they may render him.

‘For the things done in community, I often cannot rest there: I perform indeed the exterior for the keeping of order; but follow always my interior, because when a man hath God, there is no need to search for him elsewhere. And when he holds us in one manner, it is not for us to take hold of him in another, and the soul knows well what unites it, and what multiplies and directs it.

‘For the interior thereof, I follow his attractive; and for the exterior I see the Divine Will, which I follow, with the discernment of his SPIRIT, in all simplicity; and so I possess by his grace, in all things, silence of spirit, a profound reverence, and solid peace. I communicate almost every day, perceiving myself strongly drawn thereto. I continually give up myself to God through JESUS CHRIST, worshipping him in spirit and in truth, loving him with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength, and seeing in all things the conduct of God, and adoring and following it. And this only abiding in my soul, all things else are defaced and blotted out. I have nothing of sensible in me, unless now and then some transitory touches: But, if any dare to say it, when I found my will, I find it so quick and flaming, that it would devour me, if the same LORD who animates it (though unworthy) did not restrain it. I enter into a heat and into fire, and even to my fingers’ ends, feel that all within me speaks for its God, and stretcheth itself forth in length and breadth in his immensity, that it may there dissolve and there lose itself, to glorify him.’

CHAPTER II.

His Humility.

1. ST. AUSTIN well observes, 'That poverty of spirit is nothing else but humility: The truly humble knowing themselves to be nothing of themselves but sin and misery, to have nothing, as being at best but manifold receivers of the grace of God; to be able to do nothing, having no power of themselves even to think a good thought, and to deserve nothing but shame and contempt, but misery and punishment. And they are willing, yea, desirous, that all others should think of them as they do of themselves.

2. M. DE RENTY being well convinced, that this is the foundation of all virtue, and that it was the proper virtue of JESUS CHRIST, whom he had proposed to himself as his pattern in all things, embraced it with his whole affection, gave himself up to it with all his force, and practised it in its utmost latitude.

3. He had so low an opinion of himself, as it would be a difficult thing to express. The greatness of God, whenever he considered it, humbled him to an immeasurable depth: 'A mote,' said he, 'in the sun is very little, but I am far less in the presence of God, I am nothing.' But correcting himself, he added, 'Alas! I am too much; I am a sinner, an anathema through my crimes.' To the same person he wrote, 'Methinks I break myself in pieces before God: That I am spoken of, that I have so much as a name, is a strange thing.' I have seen him very often (says one that knew him well) humble himself, as it were to the centre of the earth, while he spoke to me of God; saying, 'It was not for such a one as he to speak of Him, but that he ought rather to contain himself in silence.'

4. This exceeding low opinion he had of himself, made him more than once say, with tears in his eyes, 'That he was much astonished at the goodness of men in suffering of him, and that he could not enough wonder, why every

where they threw not dirt at him, and that all the creatures did not bandy against him.' And he was persuaded, it was much boldness in him to speak, and that men showed great patience in enduring his conversation.

5. Nor was there any thing which did not serve to increase his humility. He abased himself much in the consideration of the weakness of our nature, of which, as he expressed it, 'It is important that a man have experience, that he may neither forget himself, nor the place he ought to hold : That no flesh may glory in his sight ; that being abased and rendered as a thing that is not at all, JESUS CHRIST may be in him, the Life of grace and holiness, waiting for the time of our redemption.'

6. But much was he humbled by the consideration of his past sins : In one of his letters to his director, he writes thus ; ' My faults are as one great heap, which I feel in myself, obstructing the light from God. I am strangely remiss and ungrateful. I find much in myself to confound and humble me.' In another, ' I am sensible of my fault, in mentioning, that I had placed a servant in such a family. I had a motion within me, not to have spoken it ; and yet it escaped from me : Of which I am exceeding sensible. I should have been more faithful to the SPIRIT of God.' And in another, ' I am as blind (or rather more) in seeing my faults as in other things. Only in general, I have a deep sense of my misery : And I can say, I am not ignorant of my unworthiness, and the deplorable corruption sin hath wrought in me. But lately, I mentioned the faults of a certain person to another that knew of them before, to make him understand that he was in a better condition. But my conscience reproached me, that I might have done this without : And I confess I meddled too much in that affair. In sum, I am a straggler from God, and a ground overrun with thorns.'

7. He drew yet further matter of humiliation from his rank and condition, and the secular advantages which it gave him. He not only despised, but was ashamed of them ; often groaning before the Majesty of God, and

saying, ‘He was in the lowest condition, according to the SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST, and that he had great confusion to see himself in that estate.’ Hence it was, that he solemnly renounced his nobility, and gave it into the hands of our LORD; that he did not love even for any one to call him Monsieur, and that he wholly declined the title of Marquis, (which was proper to his house,) and suffered only that of BARON of RENTY.

8. Even the gifts and graces of GOD made him more humble; thus producing their true effect, which is, To abase and elevate the soul both together, to raise it to GOD, and abase it to itself. In whatever good was done by him, he assumed no share at all, but referred all to GOD the true source. And so in the management of all those talents, he had always his hands clean, without touching what appertained to GOD. Nor would he therefore that any one should consider him in what he said or did, but regard GOD alone therein. And to one who much desired a visit from him, he wrote thus, ‘I cannot bear the account you make of my visits and society. Let us look much upon GOD; let us bind ourselves strictly to JESUS CHRIST, that we may learn of him fully to renounce ourselves. O, my GOD, when will it be that we shall eye ourselves no more, when we shall speak no more of ourselves, and when all vanity shall be destroyed!’

9. He likewise esteemed himself most unworthy of any of the grace or favours of GOD. Of which he says to a friend, ‘The gifts of GOD are sometimes so great, that they put us beyond ourselves. As among men, if a poor man receive a gift from a Prince, according to the grandeur of his own power, he is utterly overwhelmed, and can find no words to express his acknowledgment: So GOD gives blessings that go beyond our expectations or capacities, and which make us see how unworthy we are, without daring to lift up our eyes; so doth their brightness dazzle, and their greatness astonish us.’

10. The same opinion which he had of himself, he was willing, yea, desirous that others likewise should have of

him. 'If I were to wish any thing,' said he, 'it should be, to be much humbled, and to be treated as an off-scouring by men.' And hence he received contempt, when it came, not with patience only, but with joy : Of which he gave an evident proof in his first journey to Dijon, whence he thus wrote to his director :

'The reports here spread concerning me are, That I have nothing but artifice and shows of devotion ; and that I kept private, out of fear by coming abroad of discovering what I was. Most, I find, even of those from whom I expected quite the contrary, have solicited against me. And hereby God hath shown me many favours. I have been with them, and received humiliation with great joy. I have been very wary of opening myself in any thing that might recommend me to them. I have only done in my business what truth required ; and for any thing else, have made it matter of confusion, as I ought. I shall be here, I believe, as one excommunicate, as the scape-goat of the old law, driven out into the wilderness for my enormous sins. I desire only to love God, and condemn myself.'

11. Nor was it only in his words but in his actions also, that the humility of his heart appeared. Since his entire dedication of himself to God, he would not suffer a cushion to be carried to Church for him ; but to be there hid and disregarded, he often mingled himself among mechanics and mean persons. He kept himself always as much as he could at the lower end of the Church ; and frequently, if the door was shut, said his prayers on the outside of it, that he 'might not,' as he said, 'put any to the trouble of opening it to a poor sinner.'

12. During the War at Paris, he went himself to buy bread for the poor, and carried through the streets as much as his strength would permit. At the same time offering to take into his care the Church plate of a Monastery, he pressed them to let him carry to his lodging, (which was two miles thence,) and on foot as he was, a very large and

weighty piece. And being desired that when he did them the favour to visit them again, he would come in his coach, by reason of the distance ; he answered, ‘ he did not love to make use of a coach, he must endeavour to make himself in every thing very little.’ He went therefore thither on foot, and returned at five or six, in the shortest days, sometimes in thawing weather. And being told of the pains he took, he replied, ‘ Our LORD took pains in a far other manner.’

13. When he was assisting with his own hand in the repairing of one of his houses, he thus expressed himself :

‘ Blessed for ever be our great GOD, by JESUS CHRIST ! I believe I ought to labour in the lowest employments ; and the time I spend therein, I count very dear, regarding it as ordered by GOD. What makes me the more to know it is his order, is this ; That from time to time I feel more of retribution from him in one instant, than the patience and humiliation of a sinner could merit in all his life. He so opens himself to me, that I am quite mollified, and melted into tears. My eyes are so full of them, that often I have much ado to keep them in, pierced as I am with love, with reverence, and with acknowledgment of his goodness manifested by his enlightening presence, and of his inexplicable conduct. I see we are not, by a spirit of pride, under pretence of the glory of GOD, to dispense with ourselves from labouring in things mean and painful. It was a work very gross and mean, for JESUS CHRIST to converse with men, who had more of rudeness than these stones I deal with. O that I may obtain a part in his obedience, and submission to the orders of GOD his FATHER !’

14. Being one day to go to a person of great quality, in a business that much concerned the glory of GOD, he would not use his coach, though he was to traverse in a manner all Paris, and it poured down with rain. One moved, that at least his footman might carry a cloak, which he might take when he came thither. But he yielded not. Only he consented to throw that cloak over him : And in the noble-

man's house, he laid aside the wet cloak, and appeared in the other ordinary one of his own.

15. Behold another effect of his humility, of which he wrote to his director, December 20, 1646 :

‘ The other day my Lord Chancellor's Lady sent me a packet of letters, in which were some from the King, wherein I was made Counsellor of State. I sent her word, that I received what had the mark of the King with all respect. But I most humbly begged she would be pleased to take in good part, if I did not accept of those letters, but desired that the business might sleep without noise. My disposition towards affairs of this nature is, to have nothing at all to do with them. If they come upon me perforce, without my seeking, our LORD will give me strength to bear them.’

16. To the same person, on another occasion, he wrote as follows :

‘ Walking one day through the streets of Paris, in a mean dress, I deeply reflected on that of the Apostle, “ We are become as the filth and off-scouring of the world.” I considered how much neatness and new things, even in the most trifling instances, do hurt (if one take not good heed) the simplicity and lowliness of a Christian spirit. And I saw it was a great temptation for any, to think to preserve his outward grandeur, in hopes thereby to have more weight and authority for the service of God. This is a pretence, indeed, that the infirmity of most Christians makes use of in the beginning: But experience draws them at last to JESUS CHRIST, who was made the lowest of men.’

17. A further proof of his humility, was his carriage to his director. He did nothing that concerned himself, without his conduct: To him he proposed whatever he designed, either by speaking or writing, clearly and punctually, desiring ‘ his advice, his pleasure, and blessing upon it;’ and that with the utmost respect and submission: And without reply or disputing, he simply and exactly followed his order. His director having written to him, he answered

in these terms ; ‘ I beseech you to believe, that although I am most imperfect and a great sinner, yet if you do me the favour to send me a word of what you know to be necessary for me, I hope with God’s help to profit thereby. I pant not after any thing but to find GOD and JESUS CHRIST, in simplicity and truth. I pretend to nothing in this world but this ; and beside this I desire nothing.’

18. The last effect of his humility we shall mention, was his extreme contempt of the world. He despised all that it could give or promise ; all its goods, pleasures, honours, dignities ; counted all its allurements as dung and dross, trampled under foot all its glories. He beheld for this end our LORD for his Pattern, who, from his very first entrance into it, made an open profession of an absolute contempt of it, “ Because he was not of the world.”

19. To animate a lady with the same spirit, he wrote to her thus : ‘ I wonder how a thing so little as man, drawn out of nothing in his original, infected with his first parents’ sin, and the addition of his own ; when he is raised to so high a degree of honour, as to be one with CHRIST the SON of GOD, can continue to esteem the world, or make any account of its vanities ! Shall the things of the earth waste the little time we have to secure the treasures of heaven ; things that all will pass away like a dream ? As we see our fathers are gone already, and there is no more remembrance of them : Their joys and griefs, their pleasures and pains, are they not all vanished away ? And are we not sure they were out of their senses, if they considered any thing but GOD in their ways ? The same will befall us : Every thing else will pass away, and GOD alone will abide.’

The same lady, in another letter, he encourages thus : ‘ Courage ; all is well ! We must die to the world, and search out the hinderances it brings to our perfection. We must live in the world as not living there ; possess it, as not possessing it. Let us drive out of our minds the affection to our fine houses ; let us ruin the delights of our gardens ; let us burn our groves ; let us banish these vain images

which we have of our children; approving in them what we condemn in ourselves; the show and glitter of the world.

‘I know there is a difference of conditions, but all ought to reject those entailments on noble blood, (as men account them,) those principles of aspiring to the highest, and of bearing nothing. Let us take from them this vanity of mind, this stateliness of behaviour. Let us arm them against the pernicious examples of those grandees in story, whose punishments are as eminent in hell, as their presumption was upon earth.

‘My design is not, that you should demolish your walks, or let your gardens run into a wilderness. The ruins I speak of must be made in our own minds, not executed on things insensible. When I say, we must set all on fire, my thoughts were, to follow that admirable spirit of the Apostle, who would that we have poverty amidst our riches, and divestment in the midst of our possessions: He means, that our spirit be thoroughly purified and separated from all creatures; because a Christian does himself great wrong, if he entertains in his heart any other inclinations than those of JESUS CHRIST, who saw all the world without destroying it, but withal without cleaving to it.’

20. It is to bring us to this spirit, that God permits us to meet so many pains and troubles in the world; as when a man sets thorns in a way, to make men take another. ‘God has his ends (says MR. DE RENTY) in all these contrarities; namely, that those who are his, should be yet more his, and despise more and more all that is in the world. By these the confusion and vanity of the world are made known to them that are not of it; who being in the spirit of death, wait for nothing more there but death; bringing forth, in the mean while, the fruits of life eternal.’

CHAPTER. III.

His Self-Denial and Mortification.

I. As it is absolutely necessary for every soldier of CHRIST, who would not “so fight as one that beateth the air, to keep the body under, and bring it into subjection;” MR. DE RENTY vigorously applied himself to this work. He made but one meal a day for several years; till he was enjoined to take more nourishment, to be the better able to undergo the great labours he undertook for his neighbour. He nevertheless ate but little, and always of the worst. A person who observed him at dinner one day, took notice, all he ate was some pears only, and that with so great seriousness and recollection, that it was easy to discern his mind was on God, and not upon his meat.

2. When one of his friends entertained him one day at Caen, he was much grieved (as he afterwards declared) that Christians should be feasters; adding, ‘It was a torment to him to be where there was so much superfluity.’ Hereon his friends took no more thought about his diet, knowing his best entertainment was the meanest fare, and that they could not oblige him more than by leaving him to his liberty. And often at Paris, when he was so far from home, that he could not return to dinner, he would step into a baker’s shop, and after a piece of bread and a draught of water, cheerfully go on with his business.

3. Nor did he deny himself only with regard to his taste, but to all his other senses also. When he went into the country, and came in the evening to his inn, after having dismissed his servants, he either passed the night in a chair, or lay down in his clothes and boots, which was his custom till death. And when at Amiens, a lady, in honour of his virtue and quality, had prepared him a rich bed in a stately chamber, he made no use of it, but laid him down upon a bench, and there slept till morning.

4. Being come to Pointois in Winter, and lodging at the

Carmelite Nuns, he told them not to make a fire, or prepare a bed. He then went to visit the prisoners, (which he never forgot,) and at his return, about nine in the evening, finding them going to prayers, without taking any thing to eat, he went into the Church with them, where he continued till eleven. And indeed at every time and every place, on every occasion, even in the slightest and meanest things, he kept a watchful eye over himself, that he might in no instance fulfil the desire of the flesh, but daily inure himself to endure hardship.

5. A short description of his mortification, or deadness to the world, we have in his own words. ‘ Since the time I gave up my liberty to God, I was given to understand, to what a state the soul is brought, which is capable of union with Him. I saw my soul reduced into a small point, contracted and shrunk up to nothing. At the same time I beheld myself as encompassed with whatsoever the world loves, and as it were, a hand removing all this far from me, and plunging it into the ocean. First, I saw removed all outward things, kingdoms, great offices, stately buildings, rich and elegant furniture, gold and silver, recreations, pleasures: All which hinder the soul in her way to God, of which therefore it is his pleasure she be divested, that she may arrive at that death which will bring her into the possession of real life. Secondly, all inward things, which are of a more delicate and precious nature, as learning, reason, strength of memory and understanding; to which likewise we are in a manner dead, if we are alive to God. And I perceived that we must come like little infants, simple and innocent, separated not only from evil, but even from our ordinary manner of doing what is good. We are to undertake what things the Divine Providence presents to us, by making our way by God to them, rather than by them to God. A truly mortified soul sees nothing but God: Not so much (if I may so speak) as the things she does, of which nothing stays in her, neither choice, nor joy, nor sorrow, for their greatness, or for their littleness, for good or bad success; but only the good pleasure and

order of God, which ruleth in all things, and which in all things contents the soul that adheres to him, and not to the vicissitude of affairs, and is therefore constantly even, and always the same in the midst of all changes.'

6. As to the particulars of MR. DE RENTY's mortification, in the first place, he was dead to riches. 'I acknowledge before God (says he in a letter to his director) his great mercy to me through his SON, in freeing me from the things of this world, and my constant thoughts are, that if his order did not oblige me to do otherwise, I would quit all that I have.' And to another, 'All that can be imagined in this world is of small concern, though it were the losing of all our goods. This poor ant-hill is not worth a serious thought. Had we but a little faith and a little love, how happy should we esteem ourselves in giving away all, to attend on God only !'

7. Thus entirely, even in the possession of riches, was his heart disengaged from them. And when the better part of his estate was in danger of being lost, he said, without the least emotion, 'Since God hath committed this estate to me, I will do what shall behove me to preserve it, and then it is all one to me what follows.' Yea, he often expressed a kind of holy envy towards the poor, and a high esteem of their condition, both as most advantageous for Christian perfection, and because CHRIST himself had lived and died therein. 'I avow to you, (says he to a friend,) the more of riches come to me, the more do I discover of the malignity affixed to them. My heart is strongly inclined to follow Him who was the most poor and depressed among all his followers. But that I know I may not put myself into that estate, I should pant after it very much. What I infer from hence is this, That not knowing the counsels of God, I cannot tell how he will dispose of me for the future : But I offer myself up to whatsoever shall please Him, knowing that with Him I can do all things.'

8. This his inward temper appeared in a thousand outward effects. He parted with several books, because richly

bound ; used no gloves in any season ; wore no clothes, but plain and close made ; carried no silver about him, but for works of charity. I have seen him at first in his coach, with a page and footman ; afterward in his coach with a footman, without a page ; then with his footman only, without his coach ; and in fine, without either.

9. And as he was dead to riches, and to all the things of the world, so he was, secondly, to the persons in it : Having no affection for any, but what was grounded upon, and subordinate to the love of God. This was particularly observable, with regard to those who are engaged to him by one of the tenderest ties, who depend upon him, and used his counsel for the conduct of their souls. To one of these he wrote, ‘I cannot hear without trouble the great matter you make of my conversation : Let us breathe after God, and learn from JESUS CHRIST an entire renunciation of our own affections.’ And in another letter thus : ‘JESUS CHRIST is ever the same, and his grace is continually advancing ; and as long as I am His, I shall be yours for his sake. He is not wont to part souls by the separation of bodies : Since his custom is, only to take away what might be a hinderance to the perfect life of the spirit.’

10. To a friend who had lost his director, he wrote thus : ‘His remove would doubtless be a great loss to you and all the country, if the Providence of God did not rather sanctify and establish, than destroy ; but by removing these visible supports, he often settles us more firmly in our adherence to him through CHRIST, where we find all power, and who is so near that he is even in the midst of us ; and when our dependence upon creatures is cut off by his Providence, we experimentally find, that we are not left destitute, but that supply is made either by the SPIRIT which dwelleth in us, or by his Ministers that remain, who the fewer they are, the more is the grace we receive by them multiplied. Nor should we be further engaged to those who assist us in our spiritual conduct, than as to God’s instruments, whose help it is his will we should make use of, but no longer than he pleaseth ; and when it is his will to take them from us by death, or otherwise, we

ought not to lose our courage, but with submission and gratitude resign all to Him, who will again provide for us as seemeth him best.'

11. He was, thirdly, dead to all desire of every kind. Being one day asked, how he could be so quiet in such circumstances, he answered, 'that through God's mercy, he was indifferent to all things, and that he no longer felt either fear or desire of any thing.' And writing to his director he says, 'For the future I could wish, if there be any thing left for me to wish, that I had nothing left me but my God: This is the rich treasure of the heart, the sure replenishment of the soul.'

12. He had no desire even of sensible grace and consolations;* touching which, to one who eagerly desired them, he expressed himself thus. 'The want of sensible comfort, dryness, and other troubles of spirit, are to be borne with upon any terms, and we must give up ourselves as forlorn creatures. throwing ourselves wholly upon God.' And again, 'However dry your soul may be, when you endeavour to place it in a state of reverence and affiance in the presence of God, persevere still as much as you can, and keep yourself shut up in the cabinet of your heart; suffer the noise of all those tempests without; be still, and mind them not; they have all their use; they serve to purge the soul, and dispose it for the operation of God upon it. Let then distractions, and all sorts of imaginations assault you, as it pleaseth God, but let them not hinder you from that holy exercise; diverting (as you are able) your mind from them, continue your sacrifice, with full assurance you shall not wait long, before your Lord come.' And when he found himself for a time, in such a condition, he would cry out aloud, 'I am thine, O God, in spite of all these things, and so I will continue without reserve for ever.' And sometimes he would write with his finger upon the ground, 'I am content with every thing that proceeds from the will

* IN this DE RENTY is not to be imitated. His pure and upright mind was misled by Popish divinity, and not guided by the Holy Scriptures.—EDIT.

of God: I ask nothing else but what he appoints for me; I will never trouble myself to procure consolations, or to be freed from dryness; my resolution is, to bless God at all times.'

13. Lastly, He was dead to his own will, which he had perfectly resigned in conformity to the will of God. 'Far be it from me,' saith he in one of his letters, 'to act in this by my own spirit; I would have it wholly annihilated, that it might know no other language but nothing, and continually nothing; to follow in all the footsteps of the Divine will, according to its measure and manner.' In another thus: 'My Saviour hath graciously brought me to such a state of indifferency for every thing, that I could be well contented, all my life, to be fixed to my bed, a paralytic, not able to stir, without making any reflection on any service I might render to my neighbour, or that I could render him no more: All things, according to the will of God, being equal to me.' And in a third: 'Of late I have been busied in such employments as were sufficient to have overwhelmed so weak a spirit as mine, had it not been absolutely resigned to the will of God. It is on him alone I rest, having renounced myself. I adore the decrees of his sacred will, who holdeth all things in his own hands, to keep us subject unto him by his justice, and to sanctify us by his love: Happy, if we have the hearts of children, the SPIRIT of CHRIST JESUS, to sigh after him, and cry continually, "Abba, FATHER."

CHAPTER IV.

His Patience.

1. QUESTIONLESS the humble man is patient, because he knows he deserves far more than he suffers: And whoever will search into the true cause of his own impatience, will find it to be no other than pride. On the contrary, M. DE RENTY being most humble, was by consequence most patient.

2. Persons who had lived a very long time with him, and carefully studied all his actions, never heard him complain for any thing whatever; neither for sickness, or loss, or any other occasion; but they always observed in him a constancy immovable, continually lifting up his heart to God, and offering all to him, without otherwise dwelling on what was grievous; being glad that the work of God went on, and receiving all in the spirit of sacrifice.

3. In his second journey to Dijon, with his lady and the Countess of Chatres, he was seized with a violent rheumatism, which put him into pain all over his body: And when he was obliged to take his bed, he went thither quite stooping, supported by a staff, and by a person that led him. But notwithstanding the extremity of the pain, he made no complaint, nor uttered one word. The ladies seeing him first quite pale and wan, and in a moment all on fire, told him, 'Surely he was very ill:' He answered only by a discourse on the pain endured by JESUS CHRIST, and the favour it was for a soul to suffer for God's will; but in terms so full of sweetness, and with so much of love and zeal, that the company were affected with great devotion in hearing him.'

4. When he was again asked, whether he was not in much pain, he at length answered plainly, 'My pains are great, even to swooning; but though I feel them in their extremity, yet, through the grace of God, I yield not up myself to them, but to Him.' He said farther, that being led into his chapel of Citry, and set down upon a bench by reason of his illness, the bench broke without any visible cause, and that he believed the Evil Spirit had broken it, in order to provoke him to impatience, making him fall untowardly; 'But by the mercy of God,' said he, 'though the pain that surprised me was sharp, I was no more moved than you see me now.'

5. Nor was it only in sickness, but in all occurrences of life, that he carefully practised this virtue; so that whatsoever befel him, though it shocked his whole nature, his body, spirit, judgment, will, inclinations, desires, designs,

and those of the best sort, he possessed his soul in patience and tranquillity, receiving all without any alteration, without being either exalted or dejected by it.

6. ‘Praying to God,’ says he in one of his letters, ‘before the Holy Sacrament, a poor man came to me to beg an alms. In this instant it was given me to understand, that if we were well enlightened, we should never imagine ourselves to be hindered, by any person or thing: Because we should in all things regard the order of God, conducting all to our advantage: We should see that both inward and outward distractions are to be received with the same spirit; and that the uneasiness these little accidents give us, springs purely from our want of mortification.

‘We ought, indeed, as far as we can, to shun the occasions; but when they come, we must look upon them as ordered by God, and receive and bear them with all sweetness, humility, and reverence: And then, though they interrupt us, the order of God is not interrupted in us. And this indeed is the great secret of the Spiritual Life; this is Paradise upon earth.

‘In truth nothing troubles us but through our own fault. All the vexation which we inwardly feel, or outwardly show, when any one crosses or hinders us from doing any thing, flows from the disorder of our too much engaged spirit. For the removing of which, and keeping our hearts in peace, we must mark this well: ‘Whoever hinders us from doing one good work, thereby gives us the means of practising another. A man, suppose, interrupts your reading and prayer; but he gives you an occasion of exercising your patience, which at this time will please God, and perfect you more than all those other employments. In them there was something of your own will; but in this you wholly renounce yourself: And the fulness of God is not, but in the emptiness of the creature.’

7. One great source of M. DE RENTY’s patience was, the high esteem he had of sufferings, which sometimes made him ready to cry out with that holy woman, ‘Either to die

thing is unprofitable in this life but to suffer. Every pleasure is a too hasty seizure of that recompense, which is not due to criminals, who sojourn in this world only to be purged. Some pleasures indeed may be sometimes necessary, in regard of our weakness; but even they are apt to hinder the soul from attaining so high a degree of perfection.'

8. 'Though I dare not choose or bring sufferings upon myself,' says he, in a letter to his Director, 'yet having always before my eyes how little I render to God for his favours, I am inflamed to suffer with our LORD. In every other thing we are receivers from God; but in this, though we receive the grace to suffer, yet the suffering is that which we can in a manner give to God, and is the best gage and proof of our love.' But he very wisely adds, 'Although I know this, yet I cease not to know what I am: And amidst all my inclinations and desires, I take care not to beg to suffer the least thing; or if I happen to do so, I revoke it afterwards, as having done foolishly. I have too much experience of my weakness. I give myself only to my God for every thing he pleases. By his order I *will* all; with him I can *do* all: And that which is ordered by him, is always accompanied by his grace.'

9. The same spirit he earnestly recommended to all who were studious of Christian perfection. To one of whom he said, 'It is a great favour to suffer, that is, if you suffer in the SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST; but there are very few that do so; very few that suffer with a perfect resignation to what God ordains concerning them; very few without some inquietude, and dwelling in their thoughts upon their pressures; few that give up all events to the conduct of God, to employ themselves entirely in his praise, and to give way by their acquiescence and submission for Him to exercise all his rights and power over them.'

10. One that was in great pain he encouraged thus: 'Many are called Christians, but few have a Christian spirit. Many look up to heaven in their prayers, but in their lives they are children of nature, looking only upon

the earth. If they do lift up their eyes to heaven, it is only to complain ; to pray God to condescend to their desires, not to show their acceptance of his. Or perhaps they will give some small things to God ; but not those on which they have fixed their affection. If he separates them from them, it is a dismembering which he must make, and to which they cannot consent ; as though the life of Christians were not a life of sacrifice, a continual imitation of a crucified SAVIOUR.

‘ God, who knows our wretchedness, takes from us for our good, the cause of our evil, a parent, a child, a husband, that he may by another evil, affliction, draw us to himself, and make us see that all these ties to whatsoever it be that separates us from him, are so many obstacles to our real happiness ; and such obstacles that we shall one day own, in the face of all the creation, the greatest mercy he ever did was to free us from them. But we must beware not to count this mercy a chance or misfortune ; for this would be to turn the remedy into poison.

‘ Let us enter into the holy disposition which was in CHRIST, to suffer willingly for the glory of God, and our salvation. Is it not strange, that though the way he passed through to glory, was ignominy, pain, and the cross, yet they that call themselves his followers, desire and expect another way for themselves to walk in ? It is a shame for a Christian to pass his days more at ease than JESUS CHRIST did. Let us therefore go after him, and suffer with him. Blessed be sickness, the loss of honour, riches, goods, of the nearest things, and the separation from all creatures which hold us bowed towards the earth, if it set us straight, and make us lift up our eyes to heaven, and enter into the designs of God over us. Blessed be the plague, the war, the famine, and all the scourges of God, which produce in us these effects of grace and salvation.’

11. The greatest exercise of patience he ever had, was that which was given him by his mother. She claimed a large share of what his father had bequeathed to him, who, with

which (her son being advised by Counsel) could not be given without wrong to his children, he referred the whole business to arbitrators, and agreed that his mother should choose them all. The day being come for their giving sentence, his mother was in one chamber of the house, and her son, with his lady and a friend, in another, where his employment was, to pray to God for such an issue as might be for his glory and the procurement of peace. When the award was brought, although it was not advantageous to him, and there was a large penalty on whomsoever did not stand to it, he heard it with perfect calmness, and immediately signed it, without objection or dispute.

12. Believing now that his mother was fully satisfied, he was no sooner returned home, than he caused *Te Deum* to be sung, beginning it himself, in thanksgiving for this happy conclusion; but God, to refine and purify him the more, permitted the Cross to continue upon him: For his mother, not satisfied yet, found means to appeal from the award, without incurring the penalty. Her son did all that was possible for him to alter her design. After earnest prayer and extraordinary fasting, he went to her, cast himself on his knees before her, and with the utmost reverence, humility, and submission, begged of her, over and over, with abundance of tears, ‘That she would please to take him and his family to herself; and after that she might dispose as she pleased of all the goods his father had left him;’ but neither would she consent to this, but persisted in her resolution of suing him at the Parliament of Dijon. This he might have prevented, and never stirred out of Paris, but in respect to her he declined it, and determined to go to Dijon.

13. Being come thither, he found all men’s minds fully prejudiced against him, which he gladly endured, that he might be partaker of the reproach, and honour the abasement of the Son of God: And when a person of piety acquainted him with the strange reports which were there spread abroad concerning him, he with admirable calmness raised his heart to God, and humbled himself before him. She asked, whether it was true that injurious papers had been

put in against his mother? he answered, ‘No; he had seen all the writings, and found them drawn with the respect due to a parent.’ She asked further, ‘If he was not much afflicted at her harsh manner of proceeding against him?’ he said, ‘No; because I so much adore the order of God over me, that I cannot be afflicted at that which he permits to befall me. I am a great sinner, and therefore not only my mother, but all the world have just cause to take part against me.’

14. She adds, in a Memorial, that many ways were proposed for adjusting the difference, but that it was the greatest difficulty in the world to bring his mother to join in any: That in the midst of these delays, she said to M. DE RENTY, ‘Sir, I shall willingly say the *Te Deum*, when once your business is ended;’ and that one day, when they believed it would be wholly concluded, he came to her with a cheerful countenance, and said, ‘It is now time to say the *Te Deum*, since you had the goodness to promise it; and may I be so bold as to desire to say it with you? O what a great and wise God have we! who knows well how to do all things as they ought and when they ought, not not according to our precipitation, but his order, which is our sanctification!’ Hereupon he said the *Te Deum*, with a spirit so elevated to God, as gave sufficient evidence of his being wholly filled with Him. And when afterwards all was broken off, without hopes of making up again, he said, ‘It is well; though nothing be done, it was very fit to return thanks to God for doing his own will, and not that of a sinner, unworthy to be heard or regarded.’

15. There passed many other things at Dijon, and since at Paris, during these differences, even to the death of his mother. But I doubt not, he who is now in the place of perfect charity, approves of my passing over in silence the failings of her to whom all his life he bore so much love and respect.

CHAPTER V.

His Faith.

1. M. DE RENTY studied with a particular care a solid foundation in this virtue, knowing how all other virtues depend upon it, as on their root, their rule and measure; and he possessed it in so high a degree, that he was more assured of the presence of God, and the truth of the mysteries of Christianity, than of the shining of the sun. He truly lived by faith. This was the path wherein he walked, working all by the spirit thereof. He beheld things not with his bodily eyes, but with those that pierced deeper. Considering them not according to their present condition, or the order of nature, but according to their future and eternal, their relation to grace and glory; regarding nothing but as it was, or might be a means of his own or others' salvation.

2. Being fortified by this faith, he was wont to say, he felt no difficulty at all, when (in his younger years) he was in a state of dryness and desertion, wholly deprived of sensible comforts.* To which purpose he writes in one of his letters thus: 'We seldom meet with persons addicted to prayer, that behave themselves well under inward desertion. They have no patience to wait for comfort. They fret themselves, and hurry this way and that, as if by their own means they could procure it, seeking for another support than that of faith, which alone should suffice any spiritual man. For "the just should live by faith," and on that foundation rest, in expectation of our Saviour, with patience; knowing these sensible comforts are but supplements to the littleness, and cordials for the faintings of our faith.'

3. Animated by this spirit, he relied not on any thing that came to him in an extraordinary way; resting neither on visions, miracles, revelations, nor inward motions, but solely on a pure and naked faith, to carry him to God.

* Here again the Popery of DE RENTY appears. The Scriptures never separate "sensible comforts" from Christian faith.—EDIT.

4. He knew our perfection consists in nothing else but the renewal of our soul in Faith, Hope, and Charity : In performing to God the sacrifices of a lively Faith, a perfect Hope, and fervent Charity.. To cultivate and adorn his soul with these, was therefore his constant care ; to unite it more and more intimately with God, through Faith working by Love, and to give himself up with all his strength to this hidden and Divine life.

5. Some years before his death, he was peculiarly employed in the contemplation of the Blessed Trinity. Wherefore he gave this account to his spiritual guide : ‘I carry about with me ordinarily an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the Holy Trinity.’ And again, ‘I possess the Sacred Trinity with a plenitude of truth and clearness ; and this in so pure and vigorous a manner, that my outward employment creates me no diversion at all.’ And another time he wrote thus ; ‘JESUS CHRIST worketh the experience of his kingdom in my heart, and I find him there my LORD and my Master, and myself wholly his. I discover now a greater enlargement of my heart, but such as I am not able to express ; only thus, It is a simple but most real sight of the Trinity, continually accompanied with praising, blessing, and offering all homage thereto.’



CHAPTER VI.

His Hope.

1. A STRONG faith cannot but produce a firm hope and charity. A true belief in God, what He is in himself, and what he is to us, will work a strong affiance in him, and ardent charity towards him ; as appeared in M. DE RENTY, who being grounded in faith, had also an undaunted hope, and inflamed affections.

2. The experience of the power and mercy of God, and

faith in the infinite merits of our Redeemer, were the two pillars on which he built his hope : And resting on these, he hoped all things. He used to say, that when he looked at himself, there was nothing so little wherein he apprehended not difficulty. But when he looked upon God, he could think nothing difficult, much less impossible.

3. Accordingly in all affairs, he relied not upon his own prudence, conduct, care, or any human strength or wisdom, but on God alone, saying, ‘ When we have done our duty with great diffidence in ourselves, we ought to attend wholly on God, and wait his time.’ And thus he wrote to a friend, ‘ As for my children, I leave them in the hands of the Holy JESUS, without determining any thing concerning them, not knowing what would befall to-morrow. He giveth me great confidence in his protection, which renders me altogether blind, without wishing any thing, but being ready for his will in every thing.’

4. Guarded with his perfect confidence, he feared nothing, but remained firm and resolute against all encounters. He walked securely in all places, at all times, in the streets, in the fields, by day and by night ; travelling through woods and forests, reputed dangerous, and frequented by robbers, without any other defence than his trust in God. A friend told him one day, he was afraid to walk in the evening in the streets of Paris without a sword, and desired his advice ; who told him, he had left off wearing a sword a long time, and advised him, after he had commended the business to God by prayer, to trust in his protection ; assuring himself, that his protection over us, is according to our reliance upon him.’

5. ‘ One day a scaffold on which he stood with his workmen fell down, and hurt several of them : But it moved not him ; his spirit remained in the same evenness as if nothing had happened ; being settled on Him in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

6. Those words were found in one of his letters to his director : ‘ My soul being armed with confidence and love, fears neither the Devil nor hell, nor all the stratagems of

man. Neither think I at all on heaven or earth, but only how to fulfil the will of God in every thing.'



CHAPTER VII.

His Love of God.

1. THE sentiments MR. DE RENTY had of the love of God, he thus expressed in a letter to his director; 'In all I read in the Scripture, I neither understand nor find any thing but this love. The very "end of the commandment is love, out of a sincere heart." And this is acquired by faith in CHRIST JESUS, as the Apostle observes in the following words: Faith uniteth us to him, whereby we sacrifice our souls and bodies, through his SPIRIT; which conducteth us to the complete end of the law, to deliver us up to God, and bring him down to us in charity, and a gracious inexplicable union; to whom be praise for ever! Amen!'

2. Writing to another, he says, 'I thank our LORD, who hath disposed you to a perfect self-denial. This is the way to love; and our love of God is shown, not so much in receiving gifts and graces from Him, as in forgetting ourselves, in renouncing all things, and suffering constantly and courageously for him.'

So inflamed was MR. DE RENTY with this love, that all his thoughts, words and works, were the fruits of it. All his virtues drew their original from this: It was the beginning, and motive, and end of all. 'I cannot conceal from you,' said he to a friend, 'that I have a fire in my heart, which burns and consumes without ceasing.' And this divine fire was so ardent in his soul, that the flames thereof often burst forth into his exterior; and he hath owned, that whenever he pronounced the name of God, he tasted such a sweetness as could not be expressed.

4. One of his friends assures us, 'he has often seen him

so inflamed with love, that he appeared like one beside himself:’ And that he has told him, when these transports were upon him, he was ready to cast himself into the fire, to testify his love of God. ‘And one of his letters he concludes thus: ‘I must now hold my peace; yet when I cease to speak, the fire within that consumes me will not let me rest. Let us burn then, and burn wholly and in every part for God. Since we have no being but by him, why do we not live to him? I speak it aloud, and it would be my crown of glory, to seal it with my blood.’

5. To another he writes thus: ‘I know not what your intent was, in writing those words, *My God and my All!* Only you incite me thereby to return the same to you and to all creatures, ‘My God and my All! My God and my All! My God and my All!’ Is your heart full of it, and think you it possible I should be silent on such an invitation! Be it known to you, that He is my God and my All; and if you doubt of it, I shall speak it a hundred times over. I shall add no more; for any thing else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with, *My God and my All.*

6. This love of God wrought in him an incredible zeal for his honour, which he thus expresses to his director; ‘One day being transported with an earnest desire to be all to God, and all consumed for Him, I offered up to him all I could, yea, and all I could not. I would willingly, if they had been mine, have made deed of gift to Him of heaven and earth: And in another way, I would gladly have been the lowest of all mankind. Yea, and if supported by his grace, I could have been content, to advance his glory, to have suffered the pains of the damned. In this disposition of a calm zeal, there is no sort of martyrdom, no degree of greatness or littleness, honour or dishonour, that passed not through my soul, and that I would not readily have embraced for the advancement of his glory. It is impossible to express one circumstance of what I felt. All I could do was, to give up my liberty to God, writing the deed in paper, and signing it with my blood.’

7. See here the zeal of a man all on fire with the love of

GOD! And the surest proof of love, conformity to his will. This intimate union of his will with God's, the object and end of all his actions, was indeed one of his singular graces, as it is the sum of all perfection. He wrote thus to one concerning the COUNTESS of CHATRES, with whom he had the strictest friendship: 'I must own, that during my absence from her, my heart was tenderly sensible of her pain. But my desire submits to the will of God; and when that is signified, he gives me grace to obey. I was not at Paris, but at Citry, when she departed; I was sent for post, but came two hours too late. Entering the town, I soon heard the news of her death. Presently I fixed myself to the will of God; whereupon I found no more alteration in my soul, than if she had been alive. I see his order in this, that I assisted her not at her death, and doubt not but He permitted it for her advantage.'

8. Another time he wrote thus: 'I have these three weeks had a fever, with a defluxion, and an extreme weakness. My frame of mind, during this condition, has been a simple adherence to the will of God. I have a heart willing and ready to receive any afflictions that can befall me. I desire whatever is decreed from above, and beg it with all my heart.'

9. In the year 1641, one of his children, whom he tenderly loved, died. When the news was brought him, he spoke not one word, nor showed the least sign of disturbance: His affection to the child yielding to his absolute conformity with the will of God.

10. At the end of the year 1643, his lady fell desperately sick, so that she was given over by her Physicians, and left speechless and without sense. This affected him in the most sensible part; and he broke out into these words:

'I cannot deny but my nature is deeply affected with the sense of so great a loss; yet my spirit is filled with so wonderful a joy, to see myself in such a state, as to give up, and sacrifice to my God, a thing so near and dear to me, that if decency did not forbid it, I would give some open testimony of my readiness thereto.' Hereby he evidenced

the will of God to be so absolutely his, that he not only willed whatever God willed, but also willed it as God doth, with pleasure and satisfaction. But it pleased God to restore his lady to her health, with respect (as we may believe) to the carriage of his faithful servant.

11. From this perfect subordination to the will of God, sprung his admirable tranquillity ; from this fountain flowed those rivers of peace which he possessed in so great perfection, that on the most sudden surprizals, his spirit was not altered, nor put into any disorder. So that he could say from the abundance of his heart, ‘ I comprehend not that thing you call mortification. He who finds no resistance in his spirit to any thing, is not capable of it. Whoso willeth whatsoever God willeth, is pleased, whatsoever happens.’

12. With this love of God was joined so deep a reverence of Him, as often cast him into trembling. And this unspeakable respect unto God’s greatness, caused him often to walk in the fields bare-headed, even in rain, or the heat of the sun : And being asked by a friend, what it was that kept him in that constant awe, and how he attained that wonderful reverence he bore to God at all times, in all places, in all employments, he answered, ‘ The sight of his glorious Majesty, which continually seems present by me, keeps me in exceeding awe, with a deep sense of his greatness and my own vileness. A mote in the sun is little, but I am far less in the presence of God.’

13. And sure it is, that this deep sense of his own vileness, before the Majesty of God, well becomes not only the greatest of sinners, but the holiest men upon earth. He that from a valley beholds the sun when it rises, and appears on the point of a high mountain, may think him that stands above to be near it, and almost able to reach it with his hand. But the same man, notwithstanding, beholds it at a vast distance above his head. And though, in reality, he is nearer than the other that stands in the valley, yet the proportion is so small as scarce deserves to be named, in respect to the total distance.

14. This reverence of God occasioned in him a great

reverence likewise to whatsoever was devoted to him : As first, to all holy places ; at his entrance into a Church, his demeanour was highly modest and serious. He never sat down there. He would remain in it as long as possibly he could ; sometimes seven or eight hours together. If any person spoke to him in Church, his answer was short ; if a longer was required, he went out and gave it.

15. He had great respect, secondly, to holy persons, especially to Priests, whom he highly honoured for their works' sake. Whenever he met them, he saluted them with profound humility, and in his travel would alight off his horse to do it. When they visited him, he entertained them with great respect ; at their going, waiting on them to the gate : And if any dined at his table, he gave them the upper hand, which civility he observed to his own Chaplain.

16. And as he had this reverence for them, so had he an earnest desire, that they might live according to the dignity of their calling. When he saw any who did not, he professed his heart melted into sorrow for them, and that he prostrated himself before our Saviour, and begged with tears some Apostolical spirits. He often said, ' Give us, O LORD, our poor fishermen : Men, simple in appearance, and vile in the eyes of men ; but great and holy within, and fit to convert souls by their sanctity, prayers, and restless labours ! And herein I discover a great mistake ordinary in the world, that outward greatness and pomp is the way to keep up men's credit, and make them more capable of doing good to their neighbours. O, no ! It is grace that hath power upon souls, and an holy and humble life that gaineth hearts !'

CHAPTER VIII.

His Love of Man.

SECTION I.

Of his Love to Man in general.

1. THE grand exercise of M. DE RENTY, was to apply and unite himself to our Saviour, and from that union and example to derive all his virtues and good works. To mould himself after him was his general course, both in his inward tempers and outward behaviour. He never took his eye off from this Divine copy, but endeavoured to draw every line exactly, to pencil his true likeness, and make him his native and perfect original.

2. This was the scope of all his designs and cares, and particularly that of his charity to his neighbour ; for which he propounded our Saviour as his grand Exemplar, weighing the affection He showed for men ; marking what He had done, and what He had suffered for them, how He sought after, and conversed with them ; how He instructed, comforted, and encouraged them, sometimes reproving, sometimes bearing with their infirmities ; at all times carrying them in his bosom, yea, in the most intimate inclosure of his heart.

3. He well weighed what CHRIST had delivered concerning this virtue : That he had established it as the perfection of his law ; that he had termed this command peculiarly His own ; that he had expressly and solemnly bequeathed it to his followers, and enforced the execution of it upon them by all the strongest and most endearing ties ; that he had made this virtue the distinctive character of those who were in reality his disciples ; and that he had charged us to love our neighbour, according to the model, measure, and fashion that he had loved us. And accordingly he determined, as far as he could, to love his neighbour with the

bent and spirit of his Master. ‘I sigh (said he) after my Saviour JESUS, desiring to imitate and follow Him whither he pleaseth. I beseech you, by your prayers, obtain for me his SPIRIT, to be my life, my whole life. Sigh and groan for me after my GOD, that I may be wholly for Him in his SON, that I may follow Him, and not live but by his SPIRIT.’

4. Agreeably to this he endeavoured, in all the commerce he had with men, to unite himself most intimately to our Saviour, giving himself up as an instrument to be guided by his hand in the helping of others, beseeching him to breathe upon him his SPIRIT of love, recommended so much in his word, but more in his actions, and to inflame him with this sacred fire which he hath kindled in his Church, that he might be wholly consumed with it. He consulted him in all his doubts concerning it, begging him to inspire what, and how, and when, he should speak and act for the good of his neighbour; and that in Him and by Him it might all be done.

5. He looked upon men not according to their natural qualities, their beauty, nobility, riches, or worldly distinctions, but according to their more noble relations, and those common to all, namely, As creatures divine, the lively images of GOD, formed to praise and love him to all eternity; as purpled in the blood of JESUS, brothers and co-heirs with Him, his inheritance bought with the price of his life, and a thousand pangs, and who therefore must be infinitely dear unto Him, and most tenderly beloved of Him.

6. In this capacity it was that he beheld men, and applied to their necessities. And hereby as he was highly useful to his neighbour, so he did not prejudice but greatly advantage himself. He looked upon GOD and CHRIST in every man. He considered, it was they that demanded succour of him. And while he was performing with all his might whatever was necessary for the soul or body of the least of his brethren, believed verily it was GOD and CHRIST to whom he rendered that assistance. And the same thought should all make use of, who would benefit their

neighbour, without prejudice to themselves. Otherwise, a man shall sooner lose his own soul, than lead another to God.

7. The charity of this man of God, built on these foundations, was so enlarged, that it seemed to have no bounds ; in that he loved not only all Christians, but all men, without excepting any. “Thy commandment,” says DAVID, “is exceeding broad ;” the same dimensions had his charity ; embracing the present and absent, domestics and strangers, friends and enemies, good and bad ; esteeming all according to their degree, speaking (as he could) well of all, doing good to all, and ill to none.

8. There was not any considerable good work of a public nature, done at Paris, or within a great distance of it, wherein he had not a great share. There was no undertaking there, tending to the honour of God or good of men, of which he was not either the author, or promoter, or finisher, and very often all these together. He was one at all the meetings of piety ; and of many the very soul. He kept correspondence throughout the whole kingdom, concerning works of charity, receiving letters from all parts, desiring his advice in all difficulties that occurred, in the erecting or perfecting hospitals, seminaries of religion, and fraternities of virtuous persons, associating together for the better applying themselves to their own and others’ salvation, and the managing all sorts of good works.

9. From Caen one writes of him thus : ‘MR. DE RENTY was our support and refuge in the execution of all our designs, relating to the service of God, the saving of souls, and the relief of the poor and distressed. To him we continually wrote, and from him we received counsel and succour on all occasions. Nor have we met with any since his death to whom we could have the like recourse in the things of God.’ Another from Dijon writes thus : ‘We cannot but acknowledge the great benefit this province has received from MR. DE RENTY. Wherever he came he hath wonderfully advanced all works of piety. We may truly say, that his days were filled with the fulness of God.

Nor do we believe he lost one minute of time, in which he did not either speak or act something for his service.'

10. He applied himself to the necessities of the English, the Irish, the captives in Barbary, and of the Missions into the Levant; took great pains for the support of the hospital at Marseilles; laboured much for the relief of Galley-slaves, and contributed much to the advancing the affairs of New-France in America. He had a design likewise to purge all trades and manufactures from the corruptions which had grown upon them, so that men might live upon them like Christians; which thing he begun and perfected in two of them.

11. The Scripture he most studied, next the life of our blessed Saviour, to qualify himself for all good works, was ST. PAUL's description of charity, in the 13th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. And whosoever is exercised in the virtues there described, will not run in vain, nor labour in vain. Indeed the more any one is animated with this spirit, the more shall he advance holiness in others. Yea, though his words be few and ordinary. For our words do not derive their force from the mouth that speaks, but from the disposition of the heart, and the power of the spirit that dwells there.

12. To qualify himself to be more extensively useful to his neighbour, MR. DE RENTY, to the natural abilities God had given him, and to the learning he had acquired in his youth, had by his industry added several smaller parts of knowledge: And that not only for his own use, but to teach them to others, whereby to help themselves. Yea, he abased himself to learn the meanest skill, which might be any way useful to his neighbour. One day in Paris he carried a friend with him to a poor man, who got his living by making wicker-baskets. He there finished a basket which he had begun some days before, with design as soon as he had learned it, to teach some poor people in the country to make them, to help to get their living. He then left the basket with the poor man, and a piece of money for teaching him.

13. Indeed he took upon him all shapes, transformed himself into all figures, condescended to all things for the good of his neighbour : All his thoughts, words and actions, being wholly cast in the mould of charity : Which made him say one day, ‘ Methinks my soul is all charity, and I am not able to express with what ardour and strange expansion my heart is renewed in the Divine life of my Saviour, burning in love to all mankind.’



SECTION II.

His Charity to the Poor.

1. WITH regard to the poor, MR. DE RENTY's thoughts stayed not on their habit or outward appearance ; but passing further, he beheld under these, with the eye of faith, JESUS CHRIST present and dwelling in them. And as he burned with an ardent affection to our LORD, so he loved them tenderly, succoured them with all his might, and left nothing unattempted for their sakes. And with these eyes, not those of nature, must every one behold the poor, that will love them indeed, and have bowels of compassion for them.

2. From the year 1641, he invited to dinner two poor men twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. But increase of business obliged him five or six years after to reduce it to one day, commonly Thursday ; when he invited three ; and willing to join spiritual alms to corporeal, he sought out such as seemed most to need instruction. To this end, while at Paris, after his morning devotions, he went to St. Anthony's Gate, and took such as were newly arrived, whom courteously saluting, he brought home, (in Winter to the fire,) made them sit down, and with a cordial affection, which appeared in his whole behaviour, instructed them in the chief points of Christianity. While they sat at table, he served them himself, setting before them with his own

hands the dishes brought in by his servants and children. After dinner, he waited on them himself to the gate, and dismissed them with an alms. This he continued to his death, and when he could not do it in person, his lady did the same to so many poor women.

3. Besides many other charities at his own house, he endeavoured the general relief of all the poor in Paris, and the parts adjacent; he busied himself to understand their wants, studied ways of redress, and carefully pursued them. What he could not accomplish himself, he commended to others, spake for them, begged for them, bought necessities for them; laboured to establish settled courses of living for men and children that were destitute, and when he could not at present provide for them abroad, maintained them at his own house till he could.

4. He was the first that motioned some relief for the poor English, driven by persecution out of their own country. He engaged persons of quality in the purchasing of lands for their subsistence. When it was done, himself undertook the charge of distributing one part of this charity. This he performed, monthly, going to them a-foot, and commonly alone entering their chamber, he saluted them with all tenderness and respect, and gave them their allowance wrapped up in a paper.

5. In all his visits to the poor, after a general survey of their wants; he examined in particular as well their spiritual as bodily necessities; and endeavoured in the first place to mark their inclinations, their passions, their ill habits; what vices were predominant in them, and what were their chief infirmities; that like a prudent Physician he might apply fit remedies, and teach them how to make the true use of their poverty.

6. As to their temporal necessities, he considered the capacity, industry, trade or employment of each: For tradesmen, he considered what tools or materials were necessary to set them to work. These he provided, either redeeming their own, or buying new. He then gave them provisions for two or three days, and provided them work not only for themselves, but also for their wives and chil-

dren. Afterwards he bought some of their work, which he bestowed in alms upon others, and took order for the quick sale of the rest ; coming to them from time to time to see if all went well, and encourage them to take pains.

7. To these we may add, his charity to poor prisoners, whom he visited, comforted, and relieved, and when he found it expedient for them, (which he always first considered,) used all means for their enlargement.

8. There was in Low-Normandy one who had been a prisoner for several years, and though innocent, was in great extremity. Many had endeavoured his release, but without success, because of a powerful adversary. The thing being commended to MR. DE RENTY, after a just information of the case, he committed the prosecution of it to his own Advocate, made a report of it to the Council, and went frequently in person to solicit it.

9. But notwithstanding, perceiving the poor man's cause to hang long, he changed his purpose, and writ to his adversary, offering, if the business might be referred to him, to take a journey into Normandy immediately. When he came to the town, he went directly to the prison, and after an exhortation to the prisoners, seconded by his alms, he told the poor man his desire, and exhorted him to pray to God for a blessing on his endeavours, and to rest in hope that by some means or other he should shortly be delivered.

10. He then went to the other's house ; whence he returned to the prison for information on some difficulties that occurred. Finding all the prisoners together at their usual devotions, he waited till they had done. Having then received information, he went back to the other, with whom he came to such an agreement, that this poor man, after a world of misery, during nine years' imprisonment, was at length set at liberty : He maintaining him eight days at his own house, advising and exhorting him every evening ; and at his departure persuaded him to go and see his (former) adversary ; whom he now found as tractable and friendly, as before he had been severe.

SECTION III.

His Charity to the Sick.

1. IF his charity to the poor was thus great, it was still greater to such poor as were sick. He was not content to assist these in one or two ways; but they found in him, and often in one visit, a benefactor, a physician, apothecary, surgeon, a pastor, friend and servant.

2. In the year 1641, he learned to let blood, and several parts of surgery. He acquainted himself likewise with the manner of making up most sorts of medicines; and he consulted with the Physician, by whom he was instructed in the principal parts of the art of physic. Whenever he went abroad, he had with him a Surgeon's box, and powders for the cure of most ordinary diseases; which he used with great dexterity, and with equal prudence, never advancing beyond his knowledge.

3. In his visits to the sick, he never shunned any service necessary for them, and in his power to perform; as making their beds, helping them to bed, making their fire, settling in order their little household-stuff; hoping thereby to win upon their affections, and draw them to God with more facility.

4. In every family he took an opportunity to inquire whether God was served there? And whether any quarrels or differences were among them, which he took care to make up without delay. And he never left any without providing for all their necessities, which he took notice of with incredible diligence, sweetness, and respect; dispensing with other business, that he might have time to hear all their complaints.

6. Neither did he only visit the sick, but they also sought him, and would find him out wheresoever he came, if they were able to go abroad. The sick, the weak, the lame, or otherwise infirm, flocked to him from all quarters: He might often be seen encompassed with them; some requesting his

medicines, some his alms, some his counsel. He treated all, as a true disciple of his great Master, with the like diffusive charity ; and stood in the midst of them with the like goodness and patience, endeavouring to do good, and to minister comfort to all.

6. Nor did his charity decline the care of those diseases which nature cannot behold without horror and aversion. During his stay at Dijon, he was informed of one, who having been among a company of soldiers, was left by them in so noisome a condition, that none would come near her, and the people at whose house she lodged were going to turn her out of doors. He went instantly to the house, persuaded them to keep her there, and hired a woman to attend her. Then he provided her proper physic and nourishment, which he brought her with his own hands : In the mean time, reading to her every day, instructing and comforting her. By this means he at length not only retrieved her from the jaws of death, but induced her to spend the rest of her life in a virtuous and Christian manner.

SECTION IV.

His Zeal for the Salvation of his Neighbour.

1. MR. DE RENTY being continually inflamed with the love of God, incessantly sought all ways, and used all means, to make Him more known and loved by all men, both here and eternally. And this his zeal had no bounds ; it extended not only to all France, but to all the world ; insomuch that he said to an intimate friend, ‘ I am ready to serve all men, not excepting one, and to lay down my life for any one.’ He earnestly desired to enlighten with the knowledge of God, and inflame with his love, the whole world ; of which Paris being as it were an epitome, he went through all the quarters and streets of that vast city, searching out what he could remove or bring in, for

the glory of GOD, and salvation of souls. And the same SPIRIT which moved him hereto, blessed his endeavours to rectify what was amiss, and to strengthen what was right. This he did in so many several ways, as a man would think it impossible: But what cannot a man do that is zealous, disinterested, and full of GOD?

2. He performed what possibly he could in his own person, not sparing any pains, nor losing one moment: And where his power fell short, he engaged others: And in all places he laboured, as much as in him lay, to induce such as desired to follow CHRIST, to join together, and assist one another in working out both their own and their neighbour's salvation. Many such societies he established at Caen, at Amiens, at Dijon, and in several parts of Burgundy; whose endeavours being animated by a true zeal for GOD, were blessed with unexpected success.

3. To arm one who was thus engaged, against the difficulties he met with, he wrote to him thus:

‘I am very sensible of the present storms that you endure; though there is no reason why men should alarm you thus, seeing they have no cause of reproach from your design, nor have you done any thing against the Gospel; yet I do not wonder at these crosses. It is sufficient to know, that you desire to follow JESUS CHRIST; therefore, you must reckon contradiction to be your portion in these days of your flesh; only be firm in your confidence in our LORD, suffering none of these storms to trouble you, or to obscure that light which hath moved you to, and guarded you in, this business. God deliver you from the reasonings of flesh and blood, which at such times are apt to multiply upon us: Be assured, that if you hearken not to them, God will manifest himself unto you; He will comfort and fortify you in faith, and in experience of the gift of his HOLY SPIRIT.’

4. To another he wrote thus: ‘Blessed for ever be the Holy JESUS, for the good beginning of those you mention. If the other had a little more courage to break her fetters, it would be a great step: And surely there needs not so

much deliberation to give up ourselves to Him, although He be to "the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Not that God hath any need of our good parts or excellent qualities, who commonly confounds the wisdom of the wise, by little things which he chooseth. Blessed be that littleness which is accounted weakness, and yet overthroweth all the power and prudence of the world.'

5. We mentioned before his endeavour to reform trades from the abuses and corruptions which, in process of time, they had contracted, and to sanctify them, that some at least in each might live like the primitive Christians, in common; deducting from their stock only their necessary maintenance, and bestowing the rest on the poor. And, at length, he in part effected it; so that there are now two companies in Paris, one of tailors, the other of shoemakers, and of these in several quarters of the city, (and the like there are at Thoulouse,) who live in community; rising, eating, working and praying together morning and evening; calling each other brothers, and living together in the strictest unity and concord.

6. Passing one day by the hospital of ST. GERVASE, and hearing it was devoted to the lodging of poor travellers, he desired leave of the Superior to instruct them, in the evening when they were met together. And this he did from that time every night, coming thither on foot, and commonly alone, Summer and Winter. After instructing them, he joined with them in prayer, which he concluded with his alms. And this he continued many years, till some Churchmen, moved by his example, undertook that work, which they continue to this day.

7. His tenderness of heart to these poor people was exceeding great, joined with such humility as cannot easily be expressed. When he met any one at the hospital, he saluted him with great respect, put him before him, and talked with him bare-headed. If any kneeled to him, he did the like to them, and continued on his knees till they rose first. One of them observing him diligently, and

knowing him to be the Lord of the place where he himself lived, was deeply affected at the sight, and came and fell at his feet: MR. DE RENTY did the like to him, and continued in that posture a long time, resolving not to rise before the poor man.

8. Going one day to visit the holy place of Montmartre, after his prayers said in the church, he retired into a desolate part of the mountain, near a little spring. There he kneeled down to prayer, and that ended, dined on a piece of bread and a draught of water. After dinner he took out his Testament, and read a chapter on his knees, bare-headed, with extraordinary reverence. Just then came a poor man, saying his prayers. MR. DE RENTY rose up to salute him, and fell into a discourse with him concerning God, and that so powerfully, that the poor man striking his breast, fell down upon the ground to adore that great God. Immediately after, came a poor maid to draw water at the well, whom he asked, What she was? She answered, a servant. 'But do you know,' said he, 'you are a Christian, and to what end you was created?' Whence he took occasion so to instruct her, that confessing she had never before thought of the end of her creation, she promised from thenceforth deeply to consider, and seriously to pursue it.*

9. In his first return from Dijon, he stopped three or four times in the way, to instruct the poor passengers; and once went out of the road, to show some labourers in the field, how to sanctify the work they were about.

10. A young maid in Paris, having been very cruelly used by her uncle, fell into such a disorder, that in a fury she accused our Saviour as the cause of her misery, for abandoning her to such a man. In this horrible condition, she received the Sacrament several times in a day; on purpose to do despite to our Saviour, and provoke him to finish her destruction. MR. DE RENTY was no sooner informed of this, than he hasted to find her out; as he did after eight days' search, in the very act of communicating. He immediately conveyed her thence, and took so great

care both of her soul and body, that she returned to herself, and gave ample testimonies of her repentance.

11. As the design of advancing the salvation of men, is attended with much doing and much suffering, it is necessary for him that undertakes it, to fortify himself with courage and patience; and both these were most eminently in MR. DE RENTY, being, in the first place, full of courage, resolute, and laborious; employing his body as if he had two more in reserve when that was spent; despatching more business in one half-hour, than others did in many days. Very bold he was in entering upon difficulties, and quick in extricating himself from them.

12. A lady who had left much to pious uses, made him her executor. Being informed her friends, men of eminent power, were much displeased, he replied, 'I never moved her to bestow any of her estate this way; but since her piety has prompted her to it, I shall not be dismayed with any power that shall oppose it: My care is to perform her will, and for other things I take no thought.'

13. Seeing one day some gentlemen fighting, he threw himself between their swords, laying hold on those who seemed most outrageous. At first they quarrelled with him; but in a short time were friends, both with him, and with one another.

14. His zeal was accompanied, secondly, with unparalleled patience; a virtue highly requisite for him that would save the souls of men; seeing he must endeavour to win their hearts, at which he is to make his first entrance; not following his own will or inclinations, but theirs; becoming all things to all men; waiting long for their conversion, and attending (without being tired and discouraged, though by all his labour he should win but little ground) the favourable moments wherein they may yield to his motives. He must, like this holy man, not only be willing to endure hunger, thirst, heat, cold, wet, weariness, and other outward pains, inseparably attendant on employments of this nature; but also the importunities, complaints, pas-

ions, the repulses, the contempts and injuries that are continually to be expected in them.

15. While he was employed in instructing the poor travellers in the hospital of ST. GERVASE, a man who was settled there, looking upon it as an intrusion into his office, came to him, as he was in the midst of the poor, and with many injurious and reproachful words, forbade him to come any more. MR. DE RENTY having heard him without any emotion, replied, 'The poor people had much need of instruction; and since he would not be at the pains of it himself, he prayed him not to hinder one that would.' This did not satisfy him at all, but he came four days together to drive out MR. DE RENTY, interrupting him as soon as he began; but he still received him with the same spirit, and at length overcame evil with good.

16. One day he visited a person who, from a groundless suspicion, had cruelly used his wife; who understanding his business, entertained him very coarsely, giving him much opprobrious language, lifting up his hand to strike him, and offering to thrust him out of doors. MR. DE RENTY replied not one word, but after some time, drew near again, embraced him, and accosted him with such soft language, that he was persuaded, at length, to go to confession, which he had not done in twelve years before, and so be fully reconciled to his wife; insomuch that he lived and died a good Christian.

17. Another time, visiting a poor old man that was sick, he began, as usual, to speak of spiritual things. But the old man, instead of listening, fell into a passion, telling him, he understood those things better than he. MR. DE RENTY told him, he would be glad to be instructed; and after a great deal of patience, and attention, taking advantage from some things in that weak discourse, to convince and inform him better, he proceeded so happily, that the rest of his days he led a truly Christian life.

18. His patience in bearing with the faults and imperfec-

tions of others, as it was truly exemplary, so it never took away, or weakened his desire to correct them, for which he only waited a proper occasion. When he intended to reprove another, he commonly first accused himself, to prepare them by his example. Having such an intention, he began a discourse of that openness with which Christians ought to tell one another the truth; for want of which we grow grey in our vices, and often carry them with us to our graves; saying, ‘He should hold himself extremely obliged to any one who would show him that kindness.’ His friend finding his heart exceedingly softened, besought him to deal freely and plainly with him, in telling him whatsoever he saw amiss in him; which thing then he did.

19. But his patience did not in the least break in upon that fortitude, which is often requisite in the things of God, for the good of our neighbour, and for the worthy preserving of our just authority. He knew severity must be used sometimes, especially when we have to do with stubborn offenders; and accordingly advised a friend, concerning a third person, ‘Take heed of humbling yourself before that man; the abasing yourself in this case, would both prejudice him, and the cause of God. Reprove him severely and roundly.’

20. And not in these instances only, but in all others, his zeal was accompanied both with freedom and prudence. For though his humility has concealed many of his inward graces and outward actions, yet many likewise has his zeal brought to light, where he judged it necessary for the glory of God, or the good of his neighbour: Concerning which he thus wrote to a virtuous lady:

‘Give me leave to speak my thoughts of that liberty we ought to use, in communicating freely the gifts of God bestowed upon us, to such persons, as may reap fruit from them; not stifling them in ourselves, whereby we obstruct a second fruit, which God expects from his graces. We should consider ourselves set in the world as a crystal, which, placed in the middle of the universe, would give free passage to all the light which it receives from above: So ought we to impart all the talents we receive, and this without disguise, or the least claim of propriety.

‘Farther: As the crystal, if several torches were set under it, would transmit the beams of them all towards heaven; so whatever honours or commendations we receive from below, should freely pass through us up to God; for God hath therefore bestowed upon us such things as are praise-worthy, not that the praise thereof should rest upon us, but that it may pass through us to Him, that he may be blessed and praised in all things.’

21. Yet his zeal, though free, was not so indiscreet as to be its own herald upon every appearance of doing good; but was very circumspect in weighing all circumstances. Accordingly, in the same letter, he gives this wise advice, touching the order and measure which are necessary to be observed in this communication:

‘To some we must lay open our hearts freely and exactly; to others more reservedly; to others altogether locked up, concealing from them what we see no disposition in them to make a good use of.’

22. Zeal indeed should be always attended with prudence, to consider things well, and execute them in the best manner; to prevent mischiefs, or redress them with as much of sweetness, and as little acrimony as possible: And in desperate cases, or where the cure would prove worse than the disease, to suffer and pass them over; some souls having defects,* as it were, incorrigible, which God permits to perfect them by humility; and others likewise, that have an intercourse with them, by patience and charity.

23. One great point of prudence requisite in a zealous man, is, neither to hurt his body by too much labour, nor his mind with too much business. As to the latter of these, MR. DE RENTY took especial care, so to manage all his works of charity, that his piety might not be hindered but advanced thereby, indispensably performing all his exercises of devotion; and while he conversed most with his neighbour, reserving a considerable part, both of the day and

* If by “defects” in this sentence he meant sins, the principle laid down by the Marquis is without foundation. Moral evil is never necessary to humble the soul of man: Divine love is the only radical cure of pride.—EDIT.

night, for conversing with God. As to the other, he thus expressed himself to a Clergyman, who had impaired his health by extreme labour :

‘ Give me leave, Sir, to tell you plainly, that you should not impose too much upon yourself, lest for want of moderation, you render yourself altogether unserviceable. The enemy usually takes no small advantage of such free and well-disposed natures ; you are not your own, but a debtor to all men. Preserve yourself therefore, not by indulging your body, but by laying upon it no more than it is able to bear.’

24. Being at Citry, in the latter end of the year 1642, he had a strong impression upon his spirit, that at his return to Paris, he should find a new employment about the poor, and be much taken up therein. Accordingly, two days after his return thither, some persons came to advise with him, about a course of relieving all such poor in the city, as were ashamed to beg. He undertook to visit a fourth part of them, and to assist them according to their necessities : An employment sufficient to take up the whole time of one man, which yet he performed, notwithstanding the multitude of his other occupations ; so that we must say, without a special assistance, he could not have done and suffered what he did ; but God, who hath limited our strength of body, can increase it when and how he pleaseth.

25. Sometimes he received before-hand only a present impulse of something to be done, without any particular discovery. As when he was much pressed in spirit to go to Pontois, without understanding any reason for it ; yet, believing it to be the call of God, he immediately undertook the journey ; where unexpectedly he met with a nobleman of great quality, who was come from a province far distant, on purpose to be instructed by MR. DE RENTY, how to serve God, which he had, till then, little known, and less practised.

26. But though this great servant of God had an excellent faculty of assisting all, yet was he more eminently assistant to some particular persons, for the healing their souls, and leading them on apace in the narrow way of

perfection. I shall mention one only, the COUNTESS of CHATRES, who being deep in the affections of the world, as are most young ladies of her quality, it pleased God to inspire her with a desire to ask advice of MR. DE RENTY ; this he gave her with so happy success, that he himself was astonished at it. In less than a year, she was so perfectly disengaged from all those little conveniences and accommodations, which our ladies persuade themselves are absolutely necessary, that one offering her something of this kind, which she was formerly fond of, she answered, ‘I thank God, I have quitted this, and many more things, for the love of God, and yet find no want at all.’

27. God gave him light to discern her proper way, to teach her to renounce herself, and advance in the paths of solid virtue, and to support her in great inward afflictions ; and she, on her part, resigned up herself to his guidance, and forced him to put his advice into execution : A thing very requisite in those who would make use of the conduct of others to good purpose.

28. Though this happy intercourse, accompanied with such signal blessings, had contracted a strict and perfect friendship between them, yet he was very wary and reserved in his conversation with her ; visiting her only when the work of God required it, and neither speaking nor staying with her any longer than was precisely necessary. This she thought a little harsh, and complained of it to a friend, whom she knew to have some power with him, saying, ‘MR. DE RENTY extremely mortifies me with his civilities and reservedness. I have great need to see him often, and yet cannot obtain it. Nay, when we are together, he will not sit down, except when I am sick, or not able to stand any longer ; and always with his hat in his hand. I beg you to tell him, what out of respect I dare not, what inquietude I suffer, to see his behaviour such toward me, who ought to be continually under his feet.’

The person acquainting him with this, he answered, ‘I proceed in this manner, because my duty to God and to

the COUNTESS of CHATRES requires it. My Saviour obliges me to converse with her ; but I must do no more than what is necessary, and so retire, for which this posture is most convenient. If we sat down, we should forget ourselves, and talk more than is necessary, and perhaps pass on to things unprofitable: Therefore we ought both to stand upon our guard.'

29. Those who undertake the conduct of souls, ought seriously to consider this answer ; and to be fully persuaded, that the business does not consist in speaking much to them, but in disposing them to speak to GOD, and in making them fit for GOD to speak to them.

30. In the year 1647, having visited one afflicted with great pains, he thus wrote to his director :

' I have been with the person you know of, and have told her what I thought suitable to her condition. I acquainted her, how we ought to lay this sure foundation ; that we are nothing but weakness and misery itself ; and that GOD from this insufficiency of ourselves to all good, means to extract humility and diffidence of ourselves, obliging us thereby to fly to his SON, to find strength in Him, and remedy for all our miseries.

' As concerning myself, I have not much to say. Only I find within myself, by the mercy of GOD, a great tranquillity in his presence, through the SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST, and such an inward experience of eternal life, as I am not able to express. Yet I find myself so naked and barren, that I wonder at the condition I am in, and by which I discourse. In my converse with this person, I began my speech, not knowing how to pursue it. After the second sentence I had not the least foresight of what should be the third ; and so of the rest. Not but that I seem to have a perfect knowledge of the things I speak, in such a manner as I am capable of it. But I only utter what is given me, and in the same way as it is communicated, I communicate it to others.'

CHAPTER IX.

His outward Behaviour, and Conduct of Business.

1. MR. DE RENTY being sensible, that even our outward behaviour is of great consequence in the service of our neighbour, being that which makes the first impression upon them, did whatever he could for the well composing his exterior, keeping his gestures, motions, looks, and all parts of his conversation in such a harmony, as he judged fittest to draw his neighbour to God.

2. He was very modest, always calm and inviolably equal. ‘Among all the things I observed in MR. DE RENTY, (says one of his intimate friends,) what first affected me was, his rare modesty and great evenness of behaviour. There was something in his looks which carried so much reverence in it, one might easily judge, he was always actually in the presence of God.’

3. In every condition and employment whatsoever, he was the same in his looks, gestures, words and actions, whether alone or in company, with rich or poor, strangers or friends, before his children or servants, yea, even before his footman, in the country or town, at the table, and every where.

4. And such a constant equality was the more observable, because of his natural disposition, which was not slow, heavy and phlegmatic, but choleric, hot and active. But the exact and perpetual care he had over himself, had wholly inverted his nature, and brought him to a behaviour, as well as temper, directly opposite to those he took from his mother’s womb.

5. Another of his friends writes of him thus: ‘That which pleased me most in him was, his great recollection and intimate union with God: Attended with such a wonderful peace of mind, as shone forth in his countenance, and begot a kind of devotion in his beholders. This union, methought, was ever the same, without any sign of dis-

traction or levity, or any word not necessary, no complaisance or human regard ever forcing him to scatter his spirit. Not but he was full of civility ; but still so as to look more within himself than without.'

6. And indeed this continual presence of God, so wholly took up his spirit, that no unusual accident, or object, or any thing rare or extraordinary could divert him. I never saw him admire any thing in the world, nor fix his eyes upon any curiosity whatever. And his gait in the streets was so recollected, modest and equal, without gazing on any thing, that a man might see JESUS CHRIST was his way, his employment, and his all.

7. In his speech he was very reserved, by choice as well as by nature. In whatever company it concerned him to speak, he did so in his course, with a composed demeanour, and words few, but material. He was never known forward or eager to speak, or in speaking, to do it with a higher tone than ordinary. If he gave an account of any business, he did it so briefly, and in words so pertinent, that it was a very hard matter to find one that spoke better, and yet less than he.

8. Things that were unprofitable, or the news of the times, were never the subject of his discourse : But always something pertaining to the kingdom of God. And when the conversation was diverted to worldly things, he either took leave of the company, or stole away without.

9. And when he talked even of good things, it was with care and moderation ; saying, ' There was much need of sparingness and sobriety, when we speak even of the things of God, lest it turn to no good account : And that it was a great trouble to him, when among serious persons, to hear them often spend precious time in talking of virtue at large, and to find them departing from such conferences, with dry, empty, and dissipated spirits.'

10. As to conduct of business, his method was, seriously to consider things, before any resolution ; and if after his own sense given, he found another's to be better, he readily quitted his own. After he had resolved, he was prompt

firm and constant in the execution of it. But sometimes, when he had gone through the difficulties of a design, he left it to a friend to finish ; not out of inconstancy, but to gain time for undertaking more, as well as to avoid the honour of it.

11. In all affairs that concerned the service of God, he had an immoveable constancy. And beside the force of his words, there appeared in his face an extraordinary assurance, (though his ordinary deportment was always sweet and quiet,) which particularly appeared in all meetings, where he manifested such a spirit, that those who beheld him, felt themselves struck with an awful regard. His proposals generally carried so much light and force in them, that all were constrained to acquiesce in his determination. But if any disputed his reasons, he knew how to enforce them ; and if they chanced to make another reply, (which was a thing that exceeding rarely happened,) he said not one word more, but his very silence, and the steadiness of his countenance, restrained any further dispute. The meeting ended, he would go to that person and ask his pardon ; informing him, ‘That what he aimed at, was, not to make good his own opinion, but to advance the cause of God ; in all other things he was ready to yield to every one.’

12. But of all things he took care, not to overcharge himself with business, to the prejudice of his piety. He knew that outward employments, even the most holy, may be hinderances to inward holiness. Wherefore he was careful not to over-burden himself with them, and very vigilant, that they should not distract and dissipate him, nor secularize his soul, but serve only as means to elevate and unite him more to God.

13. And God so blessed him herein, that in the multitude of business, he was still in a continual recollection. A familiar friend asking him, whether in that throng of employments, he observed his usual two hours of prayer, he answered, ‘When I can, I keep three hours, sometimes four or five ; but when occasion offers to serve my neigh-

bour, I easily quit them ; for God, of his mercy, hath given me the grace to be inseparably with Him, even in the crowd of business.' To the same purpose he wrote to his director : ' I continue my devotion out of the time and place of prayer, even in the midst of converse and business ; and I tell you sincerely, though I perform every thing so ill, yet I find little difference of times for prayer, being recollected continually : ' And the same might be gathered, (as was observed before,) from his modesty and composed countenance, clearly evidencing, that his soul was wholly and constantly in application to God, from whom he drew light and strength, for the conduct of all his business : Of which he thus wrote to his director, ' My recollection hinders no business at all, but furthers it. Without it I should have a solicitous desire of doing all myself ; whereas I act now in a most calm way, in which I have no share ; for it is our LORD that doeth all.' In another letter thus : ' Finding myself one day much burdened with variety of businesses, I had a desire to draw off my mind wholly, and at the same instant it was done. Since that time they create me no trouble, and I despatch them more readily without thinking of them. This grace hath been often renewed in me, (although in several manners,) which I acknowledge to be very great, because it preserves me disengaged, even in the multiplicity of business.'

14. If, after he had done his part, any design miscarried, he rested well satisfied. On such an occasion he thus wrote to a friend : ' We may take up good designs, and God often inspires them ; yet when He is pleased to permit a contrary event, we must adore his secret will, which brings more of mercy in the crossing of them, than if they had succeeded. We should always be jealous over our spirit, that it fix not upon any thing.' And again, ' Our LORD has his designs, which he effects by such means as we would not at all make choice of. The reason is, because He would break our wills, and abate our dependencies upon earth. Therefore He often crosses our best undertakings, being more jealous

of the sacrifice of our hearts, than any thing else, how specious soever.'

15. I cannot better conclude this chapter, than with a letter written to his Director on this subject :

'For these three or four months I have been, as it were, continually employed in outward works, as removing from place to place, new building a Church, taking care of the sick, reconciling differences, conferring with all sorts of people. Yesterday, hearing those words of the Gospel read, "Thou art troubled about many things," it was said to my heart, "Thou art troubled about many things," giving me to understand, that the things we are employed upon, according to the will of God, do not create us that trouble; and that MARTHA was not reprov'd for doing the work, but for doing it too solicitously : Our SAVIOUR intimating to her, that no business should be done with inordinate agitation of spirit. Since our great business is to hear the Eternal Word, and act nothing with disturbance, but all in peace by his SPIRIT.

'I received hereby a great support in the performance of these petty exterior offices, and made no difficulty at all to yield myself up to this holily-disordered Divine order. At the same time I enjoyed such a sensible impression of God, yet excelling all sense, that if I had been thrown like a bowl, I could never have lost the sight of my God. Our LORD turns this bowl in a strange manner, even as it pleaseth Him. And these several turnings are all for the soul's advantage, whereby she is fashioned for every occasion, that she may do nothing for or by herself, but all for God, and according to Him.

'I see, likewise, that one whom God employs in these low affairs, if he follow them with the same fidelity, is as acceptable to God, as one that is employed in the most noble functions. Will nothing please you but to convert worlds ? You shall be content to carry stones, and sometimes to sit still and do nothing. You are then to offer the sacrifice of patience ; and I believe it is a thousand times more rare to find a soul thus faithful in patience,

and content to do no more than God would have him, than faithful in actions that appear abroad.

‘ I have one word more to tell you, which is, that I am really ashamed and confounded, that I do no more for God ; which, indeed, with the sense of my unfitness for any thing that is good, would work me much torment, did I not consider, He is All-sufficient, and doeth with us as He pleaseth.’



CHAPTER X.

Of his Death.

1. ON the 11th of April, 1649, he found himself very ill, and having concealed his sickness five days, was then constrained to take his bed. He endured great pains all over his body, with which his mind too was so much affected, that he professed, if God had not assisted him against the ravings of his imagination, he should have spoken more extravagancies than any madman. ‘ There was much,’ he said, ‘ in such a condition to humble him. But it was the duty of a sinner to honour God, in all conditions wherein He should place him.’

2. During these great pains and torments, and during the whole course of his sickness, his ordinary employment consisted in affectionate elevations of his soul to God, in thoughts and words of blessing, praise, and submission to whatsoever was laid upon him, and of meekness and perfect obedience to all that attended and had the care of him, with such a humble and contented spirit, that he thought all well done, though sometimes it was otherwise.

3. His patience never gave way to any complaint ; and when his keeper, who was of the Hospital of Charity, with whom he had visited so many poor and sick, importuned him to declare his pain, ‘ O sister,’ said he, ‘ how does the love of God wipe away all pain ! The servants of God

suffer nothing.' Another friend asking, if his pain was not great? he answered, 'No.' The other replied, he thought it was. 'It is true,' saith he, 'that I am much clogged with my disease; but I feel it not, because I do not think of it.'

4. Being urged to take some sweet things, he refused, saying, 'These make little for life or for death.' Yet he refused not physic, but took it with a cheerful countenance, though it was very bitter, and he had a great difficulty in swallowing. Indeed when one told him of another medicine which had done great cures, he answered, 'Patience is a sovereign remedy,' intimating his unwillingness to try it. Yet when it was brought, he took it without any reluctance.

5. His sickness increasing more and more, yet he never called for any thing to refresh him: And when they had forced clean sheets upon his bed, and a pillow, which he had before refused, he said, 'Lo, here lies a gentleman at his ease!'

6. Feeling some joy arise in him, upon the sight of a person of his acquaintance, with whom he had held a strict correspondence in spiritual things, who came out of the country on purpose to visit him: He immediately repeated thrice over, with great fervour, 'I desire nothing more but God.'

7. Reflecting on the poor, the constant objects of his tenderest care, he said to his lady, 'I recommend the poor to you. Will not you have a great care of them? You will perform it better than I. Fear nothing: What you give to them, will not lessen the rest.'

8. The greatest part of the first week of his illness, and some part of the second likewise, was spent by him in works of mercy, appointing of alms, and giving orders for letters to be written into several provinces, about business of charity wherewith he stood charged, and whereof he gave an exact account.

9. Many persons of quality coming to visit him, he received them with much civility, but not without some concern, because most of those visits drew on discourse of

worldly things. ‘They come hither (said he) to talk Philosophy, of which I have no need.’ And another time his expression was,

‘A Christian should talk little.’

10. A lady of great piety coming to visit him said, ‘Sir, I would with all my heart lay down my life to save yours.’ He replied with a cheerful look, and eyes lifted up to heaven, ‘To die is not to be lost. Our conversation and union will hereafter be more near and intimate.’ She said, ‘But, Sir, if it pleased God to restore your health, and continue you longer with us; do not you desire it?’ ST. MARTIN desired to live upon these terms.’ He answered, ‘O Madam, there is no comparison between a saint and a sinner: The will of God be done.’

11. The third day of his sickness he desired his director might be sent for. And being asked, if he found himself worse? he answered, ‘No; but in a business of this consequence, it is not safe to delay, for fear of a surprisal, the judgment and memory being both so subject to decay.’ The next day he made his confession, the day after he confessed again, and almost every day till his death.

12. The Pastor of his parish having administered to him the holy communion, and observing his deep silence, not speaking one word, but only ‘with profound humility, ‘My God, my God, pardon me; I am a great sinner;’ He asked him the reason, why he spake so little, and did not apply himself to those who were well-pleased to hear him? ‘It is not fitting (said he) to speak in the presence of Him whom I have received,* nor take up any room in those hearts, which ought to be filled only with God.’ He added, ‘My spirit is now applied to that joy, which a creature ought to have, to see himself upon the point of being re-united to his First Principle, and his Last End.’

* THE reader will recollect that DE RENTY belonged to the Romish Church; and as such, notwithstanding the depth of his piety, he held the absurd and monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation.—EDIT.

13. The same day after dinner, one told him, ‘It was fit to use some diversion from his serious thoughts; the Physicians judging his disease to have much of melancholy in it.’ To whom he replied, ‘I never had any joy comparable to that I have felt this day.’ He asked him, for what cause? ‘To think (said he) that I am going to be united with my God.’ He added earnestly, ‘I desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.’ “The SPIRIT and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come. Behold I come quickly. Amen; come LORD JESUS!”’

14. About noon, he desired his window might be set open, that he might behold the brightness of the day: Which being done, he cried out, ‘O bright day of eternity! How this sun-shine cheers me! helping me to meditate on that day, which shall never have night!’

15. The more his sickness increased, the more he strove to unite himself to God by prayer, imitating his Master, who in the strength of his agony, prayed the more earnestly. And when the violence of his disease so oppressed him, that he had need of greater straining, to keep his mind fixed upon God, he cried out,

‘Courage, courage, eternity is at hand!’

16. Many such speeches he uttered with incredible fervor, though he could not pronounce them distinctly, by reason of the extreme dryness of his throat, occasioned by the fever. Till at last, stopping his speech, he fixed his eyes steadfastly on heaven, for a quarter of an hour together, with a smiling look, and full of reverence, as if he saw some extraordinary sight. After which, gathering all his strength, he sat up in his bed, took off his cap, and holding it in his hand, said, (with words half stifled in his throat, as well by the ardor of his spirit, as the weakness of his body,)

‘I adore you, I adore you.’

17. 'The curate having used the service of the church, to which he attended with great devotion, answering to every prayer, asked him, if he would not give a blessing o his children? He answered, 'How so, good Sir, shall I presume to give a blessing in your presence? I should be happy to receive one from you.' But being urged thereto, and told the church allowed it, he lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, saying,—

'May it please God to bless you and to preserve you by his grace from the malignity of the world, that you may have no part therein! And above all, my children, may you live in the fear and love of God, and yield due obedience to your mother!'

18. On Saturday, about half an hour past ten in the forenoon, being just recovered out of a violent convulsion, looking attentively on those that were present, he made signs with his hands, head and eyes, with a pleasant countenance, for an intimate friend to come near him. Which being done, he said,—

'Sir, I have one word to say to you before I die;' (then pausing a little to recover his strength, he testified his affection to him, but in words that could not distinctly be understood. At length raising his voice, and speaking more articulately to him, he went on) 'The perfection of a Christian life, is to be united to God by faith. Let us not entangle ourselves in novelties. Let us adore his conduct over us, and continue faithful to him unto the end. Let us adhere to that one God, crucified for our salvation. Let us unite all our actions, and all that is in us to his merits; hoping that if we continue faithful to Him, by his grace we shall there be partakers of the glory of his Father. I hope we shall there see one another one day, which shall never have an end.'

19. Sometime after, fixing his eyes upon heaven, he said, 'The Holy JESUS, where is He?' Then turning himself, he presently entered into his last agony; which held about a quarter of an hour, the greatest part of which he spent in pronouncing the name of JESUS; making,

as well as he could, acts of resignation, and commending his spirit to God. After which he expired sweetly, and his holy soul departed to its place of rest.

20. Thus lived and died MR. DE RENTY, one of the most glorious lights God hath bestowed upon his church in our age. He died at Paris, in the 37th year of his age, the 24th of April, 1694, about noon. We have great reason to admire the secret counsels of God, in taking out of the world, in the flower of his age, a man so qualified to advance the honour of God, and the good of his neighbour. But when we say, it was the hand of God, all things are therein concluded. Hereby He is pleased to let us know, that He hath no need of us for the advancing his glory ; and that when He does use us as instruments therein, we ought to behave with all humility in his presence. He hath translated him to another place, where he glorifies his Majesty with greater perfection ; and where he waits for us to glorify and love, together with him, God the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, to all eternity ! Amen !

CHRISTIAN LETTERS,

BY

MR. JOSEPH ALLEINE.

TO THE READER.

THE Letters of MR. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, have been generally admired by all the children of GOD, into whose hands they have fallen, for the vein of piety, trust in GOD, and holy zeal, which run through them. The same piety, zeal, and confidence in GOD, shine through all the letters of MR. ALLEINE: So that in this respect he may well be styled, THE ENGLISH RUTHERFORD. But yet there is a very discernible difference between them: In piety and fervour of spirit they are the same: But the fervour of the one more resembles that of ST. PAUL, of the other, that of ST. JOHN. They were both men of the most intrepid courage: But in love MR. ALLEINE has the pre-eminence. He seems to excel in bowels of mercy, meekness, gentleness, in tenderness, mildness and sweetness of spirit, even to his bitterest enemies. I do not therefore scruple to give these Letters the preference, even to MR. RUTHERFORD'S: As expressing, in a still higher degree, the love that is "long-suffering and kind," which "is not provoked," which "thinketh no evil," and which "hopeth, believeth and endureth all things."

JOHN WESLEY.

LONDON, *March 7, 1767.*

CHRISTIAN LETTERS.

LETTER I.

To his Wife concerning his acceptance of Taunton.

MY DEAR HEART,

By this time I hope thou hast received mine, touching Taunton. I find my heart much inclining that way. I will tell thee the principles upon which I go.

First, I lay this for a foundation, That a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. It was accounted a wise prayer that AGUR put up, to be "fed with food convenient for him." And certain it is, that where men have least of the world, they esteem it least, and live more by faith in God, casting their care and burden upon him. O the sweet breathings of DAVID's soul! The strong actings of his faith, when his condition was low and mean! How fully doth he rely upon God: And certainly, could we that are unexperienced, but feel the thorns of those cares and troubles, that there are in gathering and keeping much, and the danger when riches increase of setting our hearts upon them, we should prize the happiness of a middle condition. Doubtless, "godliness with contentment is great gain." "Seekest thou great things for thyself, (said the Prophet to BARUCH,) seek them not." Certainly a good conscience is a continual feast, and enough for a happy life.

Secondly. I take this for an undoubted truth, That a dram of grace is better than a talent of wealth; and therefore such a place where we had little to do in the world, to take off our thoughts from the things of eternity, and had the advantage of abundance of means, and the daily oppor-

tunities of warming our hearts with the blessed society of Christians, is (if we pass a true and spiritual judgment) without comparison before another place, void of those spiritual advantages. Let us think, what though our purses may thrive better in a place of large maintenance; yet, where are our souls likely to thrive any way answerable to what they are in this? We should have but little in the world; but what is this, if it be made up to us in communion with God and his people? If we thrive in faith, and love, humility, and heavenly-mindedness, what matter is it, though we do not raise ourselves in the world? O, who would leave so much grace, and so much comfort in communion with CHRIST and his saints, for the probabilities of living a little more handsomely? It is a strange thing to see how Christians generally judge. What is it worth a year? Is the maintenance certain? What charges are there likely to be? These are the questions we commonly ask first, when we speak of settling. But alas, though those things are to be considered too, yet what good am I likely to do? What good am I likely to get? These should be the chief things we should judge by. What if we have but a little in the world? Why then we must keep but a short table, and give the meaner entertainments to our friends. O but will not this be abundantly made up, if we have more outward and inward peace? Let others hug themselves in their corn, and wine, and oil, in their fat livings, and their large tables, if we have more of the light of God's countenance, who would change with them?

Thirdly. That the surest way to have any outward mercy, is to be content to want it. When men's desires are over-eager after the world, they must have thus much a year, and a house well furnished, and wife and children, thus and thus qualified, God doth, usually, break their wills by denying them, as one would cross a froward child of his stubborn humour; or else he puts a sting into them, that a man had been as well without them. The best way to get riches, is out of doubt to set them lowest in one's desires. SOLOMON found it so: He did not ask riches,

but wisdom, but GOD was so pleased, that he threw in them into the bargain. Nothing sets GOD's mercies further off than want of free submission to want them. Certainly, GOD will never be behind-hand with us. Let our care be to build his house, and let him alone to build ours.

Fourthly. That none ever was, or ever shall be, a loser by JESUS CHRIST. Many have lost much for him, but never did, never shall any lose by him. Take this for a certainty, whatsoever outward comforts we leave, or outward advantages, that we may glorify him in our services, and enjoy him in his ordinances more than other-where we could, we shall receive an hundred fold in this life. It is a sad thing to see how little CHRIST is trusted; men will trust Him no farther than they can see him. Alas, hath he not a thousand ways, both outward and inward, to make up a little outward disadvantage to us? Have any ventured themselves upon him in his way, but he made good every promise to them? Let us therefore exercise our faith, and stay ourselves on the promise, and see if ever we are ashamed of our hope.

Fifthly. That what is wanting in the means, GOD will make up in the blessing. This I take for a certain truth, while a man commits himself and his affairs to GOD, and is in a way that GOD put him into: And if a man have but a little income, if he have a great blessing, that will make it up. Alas, we must not account of mercies by the bulk. What if another have a pound to my ounce, if mine be gold for his silver, I will never change with him. As it is not bread that keeps men alive, but the word of blessing that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD; so it is not the largeness of the means, but the blessing of the LORD that maketh rich. O! if men did but believe this, they would not grasp so much of the world as they do. Well, let others take their course, and we will take ours to wait upon GOD by faith and prayer: Let others toil to enlarge their income; we will pray GOD to enlarge our blessing; and I doubt not but we shall prove the gainers.

Sixthly. That every condition hath its snares, and trou-

bles, and therefore, we may not expect to be without them, wherever we be; only that condition is most eligible that hath fewest and least. I cannot object any thing against the proposal of Taunton, but the meanness of the maintenance. And let us consider how inconsiderable this inconvenience is, in comparison of those we must reckon upon meeting with, if God cast us into another place. Upon these considerations, I find my heart much inclined to accept of their offer at Taunton. I beseech thee to weigh the matter and tell me thy thoughts, and which way thy spirit inclines, for I have always resolved the place I settled in should be to thy content. I have been so large in delivering my judgment, that I must thrust up my affections into a corner. Well, though they have but a corner in my letter, I am sure they have room enough in my heart. But I must conclude: 'The LORD keep thee, my dear, and cherish thee for ever in his bosom; farewell, mine own soul,

I am, as ever, thine own heart,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

Oxon, *May 27*, 1659.

LETTER II.

*To my most dearly beloved, my Christian Friends in
Taunton, Salvation.*

MOST LOVING BRETHREN,

I SHALL never forget your old kindnesses; would I never so fain forget them, yet I could not, they are so continually renewed; for there is never a day but I hear of them: Nay, more than hear of them, I feel and taste them. The GOD that hath promised, they that give to a Prophet but a cup of cold water, shall receive a Prophet's reward; He will recompense your labour of love, your fervent prayers, your care for my welfare, and your bountiful supplies. I do and will bless the LORD as long as I live,

that he hath cast my lot in so fair a place, to dwell in your communion; and especially to go in and out before you, and to be the Messenger of the LORD of Hosts to you, to proclaim his law, and to preach his excellencies, to be his spokesman to you, and to woo for him, to espouse you to one Husband, and to present you as a chaste virgin unto CHRIST. LORD! how unworthy am I of this glorious dignity, which I verily believe the brightest angels in heaven would be glad of. I cannot repent, notwithstanding all the difficulties that attend his despised servants, and that are like to attend them: I have set my hand to his plough; and when I was entered into that sacred office, I told you, ‘Most gladly do I take up this office with all the persecution, affliction, difficulties and inconveniencies that do and may attend it.’ And, blessed be GOD, I am through his goodness of the same mind still; and my tribulations for CHRIST, confirm my choice and resolution to serve him with much more than my labours. Brethren, let them take up with the world that have no better portion; be content that they should bear away the riches and preferments and glory and splendor of the world. Alas! You have no reason to envy them: Verily, they have a lie in their right hand: Ah! how soon will their hopes fail them; how soon will the crackling blast be out, and leave them in eternal darkness! They shall go to the generation of their fathers, they shall never see light; like sheep they shall be laid in their graves, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. But for you, my brethren, I am jealous that none of you should come short of the glory of GOD. I am ambitious for you, that you should be all the heirs of an endless life, of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away.

Ah my brethren! why should not you be all happy? “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, lest a promise being left you of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it.” O look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of GOD! How it grieves me that any of you should fall short of mercy at last! That any of that flock

over which the HOLY GHOST made me overseer should perish ; when CHRIST hath done so much for you, and when we (through his grace) have done somewhat to save them. Ah dear brethren ! I was in great earnest with you when I besought you out of the pulpit, many a time to give a bill of divorce to your sins, and to accept of the mercy that in the name of GOD Almighty I did there offer to you. Alas ! how it pitied me to look over so great a congregation, and to think that I could not, for my life, persuade them, one quarter of them, to be saved ! How it moved me to see your diligence in flocking to the most hazardous opportunities, since the Law forbade my public preaching ; and yet to think that many of you that went so far, were like to perish for ever for want of going further ! How fain would I carry you further than the outward profession : O, how loath am I to leave you there ! How troubled to think that any of you should hazard much for religion, and yet miscarry for ever by the hand of secret pride or untamed passion, or an unbridled tongue, or, which I fear most of all, a predominant love of the world in your hearts. Alas, is there no remedy, but I must carry you to heaven's gate and leave you there ? Oh, that I should leave the work of your souls but half done ; and bring you no farther than the *almost* of Christianity ! Hear, O my people, hear, although I may command you, upon your utmost peril in the name of the LORD JESUS that shall shortly judge you, I beseech you, I warn you as a father doth his children, to look to the securing of your everlasting condition. Take heed of resting in the outer part of religion ; but be restless till you find a thorough change within, that you are quite new in the bent of your hearts ; for here is the main of religion. For CHRIST's sake, for your souls' sake, look to it, that you build upon the Rock, that you unfeignedly deliver yourselves to the LORD to be under his command, and at his disposal in all things ; see that you make no exceptions, no reserve, that you cast over-board all your worldly hopes, and count upon parting with all for CHRIST ; that you take him alone for your whole happiness. Wonder

not that I often inculcate this : If it be well here, it is well all ; if unsound here, the error is in the foundation and you are undone. Brethren, I see great trials coming, when we shall see professors fall like leaves in Autumn ; therefore is it that I would so fain have you look to your standing, and to secure the main. O make sure whatever you do ; get and keep your evidences clear ! How dreadful would your temptations be, if you should be called to part with all for CHRIST, and not be sure of Him neither ! Get a clear understanding of the terms of life, which I have set before you in that Form of Covenanting with GOD in CHRIST, that I commended to you. I would that none of you should be without a copy of it. Be much in observing your own hearts, and crying mightily to GOD for assurance. Be strict and watchful in your whole course, and I doubt not but you will quickly have it.

I cannot conclude till I have given you my unfeigned thanks for your most kind and gracious letter. Sure it shall be in store with me, and laid up among my treasures. That GOD is pleased to make use of me for your edification, is matter of highest joy unto me ; as also to see your steadfastness in CHRIST, your unshaken resolutions, notwithstanding all the tempter's wiles. Go on, my dearly beloved, and the LORD strengthen your hands and your hearts, and lift you up above the fears of men. The LORD strengthen, establish, settle you, and after you have suffered a while, make you perfect. I leave my brethren in the everlasting arms, and rest,

Your Ambassador in bonds,
JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the common Gaol at Juelchester,
June 13th, 1663.

LETTER III.

To the Beloved People the Inhabitants of the Town of Taunton, Grace, Mercy and Peace from God our FATHER, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MOST ENDEARED AND BELOVED FRIENDS,

I READILY acknowledge myself a debtor to you all, and a servant of all, and therefore I have sent to salute you all. My lines did fall in a fair place when the LORD did cast my lot among you; I remember the tears and prayers that you have sent me hither with. How can I forget how you poured out your souls upon me; and truly you are a people much upon my heart, whose welfare is the matter of my continual prayers, care, and study. And Oh! that I knew how to do you good. Ah! how certainly should never a son of you miscarry. Ah! how it pities me to think how that so many of you should remain in your sins after so many and so long endeavours to convert. Once more, Oh! my beloved, once more hear the call of the most high God unto you. The prison preaches to you the same doctrine that the pulpit did. Hear, O people, hear; he that hath an ear let him hear. The LORD of life and of glory offers you all mercy, and peace, and blessedness: Oh, why should you die? "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." What! miss of life, when it is to be had for the taking! God forbid. O my brethren, my soul yearns for you, and my bowels towards you. Ah, that I did but know what arguments to use with you! Who shall choose my words that I may prevail with sinners not to reject their own mercy? How shall I get within them? How shall I reach them? O that I could but get between their sins and them. Beloved brethren, the LORD JESUS hath made me, most unworthy, his spokesman, to bespeak your hearts for him: And O, that I knew but how to woo for him, that I might prevail! These eight years have I been calling, and yet how great a part remain visibly in their

sins, and how few have I gained to CHRIST by sound conversion !

Many among you remain under the power of ignorance : Ah ! how often I have told you the dangerous, yea, damnable state that such are in. Never flatter yourselves that you shall be saved though you go on in this ; I have told you often, and now tell you again, God must be false if ever you be saved without being brought out of the state of ignorance : If ever you enter in at the door of heaven, it must be by the key of knowledge ; you cannot be saved, except you be brought to the knowledge of the truth. A people that remain in gross ignorance, that are without understanding, the LORD that hath made them, will not have mercy on them. O, for the love of God and of your souls, I beseech you, awake and bestir yourselves to get the saving knowledge of God. You that are capable of learning a trade, are you not capable of learning the way to be saved ? And is it not a pity that you should perish for ever for want of a little pains, and study, and care to get the knowledge of God ? Study the Catechism ; if possible, get it by heart ; if not, read it often, or get it read to you ; cry unto God for knowledge ; improve the little you have by living answerably. Search the Scriptures daily, get them read to you if you cannot read them. Improve your Sabbaths diligently, and I doubt not but in the use of these means you will sooner arrive to the knowledge of CHRIST than of a trade.

Many have escaped the gross pollutions of the world, but stick in the form of godliness. O I am jealous for you that you should not lose the things that you have wrought ; for the LORD's sake put on, and beware of perishing in the suburbs of the city of refuge. Beg of God to make thorough-work with you ; be jealous for yourselves and try your estates, but only with those marks that you are sure will abide God's trial.

But for you that fear the LORD in sincerity, I have nothing but good and comfortable words : May your souls

ever live. What condition can you devise wherein there will not be matter of joy unspeakable to you? O beloved, know your own happiness, and live in that holy admiring, adoring, praising of your gracious God, that becomes the people of his praise. The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with you all. The LORD create a defence upon you, and deliverance for you: The LORD cover you all the day, and make you to dwell between his shoulders! I desire your constant, instant, earnest prayers for me, and rest,

A willing Labourer, and thankful Sufferer for you.

JOSEPH ALLEINE

From the common Gaol, in Juelchester,

July 4th, 1663.

LETTER IV.

To my most endeared Friends, the Servants of CHRIST in Taunton, Grace and Peace.

MOST DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, MY JOY AND CROWN:

My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved. I know that you are the butt of men's rage and malice: But you may satisfy yourselves as DAVID in sustaining SHIMEI's curses: It may be, the LORD will look upon our affliction, and requite good for their cursing this day. But however that be, hold on your way. Your name indeed is cast out as evil, and you are "hated of all men for CHRIST's sake," for cleaving to his ways and servants: But let not this discourage you, for you are now more than ever blessed: Only hold fast, that no man take your crown. Let not any that have begun in the Spirit end in the flesh. Do not forsake God, till he forsake you; "he that endureth to the end shall be saved:" The promise is to him that overcometh; therefore think not of looking

back: Now you have set your hands to CHRIST's plough, though you labour and suffer, the crop will pay for all. Now the LORD is trying who they be that will trust him. The world are all for a present pay; they must have something in hand, and will not follow the LORD when there are hazard and hardship in his service. But now is the time for you to prove yourselves believers, when there is nothing visible but hazard, and expense, and difficulty in your Maker's service. Now, my brethren, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: If you can trust in his promises now, when nothing appears but bonds, and losses, and tribulation, this will be like believers. Brethren, I beseech you to reckon upon no other but crosses here. Let none of you flatter yourselves with dreams of sleeping in your ease, and temporal prosperity, and carrying heaven too. Count not upon rest till you come to the land of promise. Not that I would have any of you to run upon hazards uncalled; no, we shall meet them soon enough in the way of our duty, without we turn aside: But I would have you cast over-board your worldly hopes, and be content to wait till you come on the other side of the grave. Is it not enough to have a whole eternity of happiness? If God throws in the comforts of this life too, I would not have you throw them back again, or despise the goodness of the LORD: But I would, that you should use this world, as not abusing it, that you should be crucified to the world, and the world to you; that you should declare plainly that you seek a better country, which is an heavenly. Ah! my dear brethren, I beseech you carry it like pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against your souls; for what have we to do with the customs and fashions of this world, who are strangers in it? Be contented with travellers' lots: Know you not, that you are in a strange land? All is well as long as it is well at home; I pray you brethren, daily consider your condition: Do you not remember that you are in an inn? And what, though you be but meanly accommodated! though you fare hard,

and lie hard ! Is this a strange thing ? What should travellers look for else ? Indeed if you were of the world, the world would love his own. But now God hath called you out of the world ; therefore the world hateth you : But remember, it is your duty to love them, even while they hate you ; and to pray for mercy for them that will show no mercy, or justice. This I desire you to observe as a great duty of the present times : And let not any so forget their duty as to wish evil to them that do evil to us, or to please themselves with the thoughts of being even with them. Let us commit ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously, and show ourselves the children of the Most High, who doeth good to his enemies, and is kind to the unkind and unthankful : And what, though they do hate us ! Their love and good will were much more to be feared, than their hatred. Brethren, keep yourselves in the love of God ; here is wisdom. O happy souls, that are his favourites ! For the LORD's sake look to this, make sure of something : Look to your sincerity above all things : Let not any of you conclude, that because you are of the suffering party, therefore all is well : Look to the foundation, that your hearts be taken off from every sin, and set upon God as your blessedness : Beware that none of you have only a name to live, and be no more than almost Christians. For the love of your souls, make a diligent search, and try upon what ground you stand ; for it pities me to think any of you should hazard so much and yet lose all at last : But when once you bear the marks of God's favour, you need not fear the world's frowns : Cheer up therefore, brethren, be strong in the LORD, and of good courage under the world's usage : Fear not, in our FATHER's house there is bread enough, and room enough ; this is sufficient to comfort us under all the inconveniencies of the way, that we have so happy a home, so ready a FATHER, so goodly an heritage. O, comfort one another with these words : Let God see that you can trust in his word. Let the world see that you can live upon God. I shall share

my prayers and loves among you all, and commit you to the Almighty God : The Keeper of Israel that never slumbereth nor sleepeth, be your Watchman and Keeper to the end. Farewell. I am,

A fervent well-wisher of your temporal and eternal happiness,

JOSEPH ALLEINE,

From the Common Gaol, at Juelchester,

July 24th 1663.

LETTER V.

To my most dearly beloved Friends, in Taunton, Grace and Peace.

MOST ENDEARED CHRISTIANS,

MY heart is with you, though I am absent. Dear fellow-soldiers under the Captain of our Salvation, consider your calling, and approve yourselves men of resolution, be discouraged with no difficulties of your present warfare. As for human affairs, I would have you to be as you are, "Men of Peace." I would have you "armed" *not for resisting*, (God forbid !) but for *suffering only*. You should resist to the uttermost ; striving against sin. Here you must give no quarter ; for if you spare but one AGAG, the life of your souls must go for the life of your sins. God will not smile on that soul that smiles on sin, nor have any peace with him that is at peace with his enemy. Other enemies you must forgive, and love, and pray for ; but for these spiritual enemies, all your affections, and all your prayers must be engaged against them ; yea, you must admit no parley. It is dangerous to dispute with temptations. - Remember what EVE lost by parleying with Satan. You must fly from temptations, and put them off at first with a peremptory denial. If you will but hear the Devil's arguments, and the flesh's pleas, it is an hundred to one but you are ensnared : And

for this present evil world, the LORD deliver you from it. Surely you had need watch and be sober, or else this world is like to undo you. I have often warned you not to build upon an external happiness, and to promise yourselves nothing but hardship here. O still remember your station! Soldiers must not count upon rest and fulness, but hunger and hardness. Labour to get right apprehensions of the world. Do not think these things necessary; one thing is needful. You may be happy in the want of all outward comforts. Do not think yourselves undone if brought to want or poverty. Study eternity, and you will see it to be little material to you whether you are poor or rich; and that you may have never such an opportunity for your advantage in all your lives, as when you seem to run the vessel upon the rocks. Set your enemies one against the other: Death against the world. No such way to get above the world, as to put yourselves into the possession of death.

Look often upon the dust that you shall be reduced to, and imagine you saw your bones tumbled out of your graves, as they are likely shortly to be, and men handling your skulls, and inquiring, Whose is this? Tell me of what account will the world be then? Put yourselves often into your graves, and look out from thence upon the world, and see what judgment you have of it. Must not you be forgot among the dead? Your places will know you no more, and your memory will be no more among men, and then what will it profit you to have lived in fashion and repute? One serious walk over a Church-yard, might make a man mortified to the world. Think upon how many you tread, but ye know them not. No doubt they had their estates, their friends, their businesses, and kept as much stir in the world as others do now; but, alas! what are they the better for all this? Know you not that this must be your own case shortly? O the unhappiness of man! How is he bewitched and befooled, that he should expend himself for that which he knows shall for ever leave him! Brethren, I beseech you, lay no stress upon these perishing things, but labour to be at a holy indifferency about them.

Is it for one that is in his wits to sell his God, his soul, for things he is not sure to keep a day, and which he is sure, after a few sleepings and wakings more, to leave behind him for ever? Go and talk with dying men, and see what apprehensions they have of the world? If any should come to these, and tell them, ‘Here are such and such preferments for you, you shall have such titles of honour and delights, if you will now disown religion;’ do you think such a motion would be embraced? Brethren, why should not we be wise in time? Why should we not now be of the mind, of which we know we shall be all shortly? Woe to them that will not be wise till it be to no purpose! Woe to them whose eyes nothing but death and judgment will open! Woe to them, that though they have been warned by others, and have heard the world’s greatest darlings in death cry out of its vanity, yet would take no warning, but only must serve themselves too, for warnings to others. Ah, my beloved! beware there be none among you that will rather part with their part in Paradise than their part in Paris; that will rather part with their consciences than with their estates; that have secret reserves to save themselves whole, when it comes to the pinch; and not to be of the religion that will undo them in the world. Beware that none of you have your hearts where your feet should be, and love your Mammon before your Maker.

May the LORD of Hosts be with you, and the God of JACOB your refuge. Farewell, my dear brethren, farewell! and be strong in the LORD. ‘I am,

Yours to serve you in the Gospel, whether by doing or suffering,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Common Gaol at Juelchester,

August 31, 1663.

LETTER VI.

*To the beloved Friends, the Flock of Christ in Taunton,
Salvation.*

**MOST DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, MY JOY AND
CROWN,**

I MUST say of you as DAVID did of JONATHAN : Very pleasant have you been unto me, and your love to me is wonderful ; and as I have formerly taken great content in that my lot was cast among you, so I rejoice in my present lot, that I am called to approve my love to you by suffering for you ; for you, I say ; for you know I have not sought your's, but you ; and that, for doing my duty to your souls, I am here in these bonds, which I cheerfully accept through the grace of God that strengtheneth me. O that your hands might be strengthened, and your hearts encouraged in the LORD your God by our sufferings ! See to it, that you stand fast in the power of the holy doctrine which we have preached from the pulpit, preached at the bar, preached from the prison. It is a Gospel worth suffering for. See that you follow after holiness, without which no man shall see God. O the madness of the blind world, that they should put from them the only plank upon which they can escape to heaven ! Alas for them ! they know not what they do. What would not these foolish virgins do, when it is too late, for a little of the oil of the wise ? But let not any of you be wise too late. Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. Beware that none of you be cheated, through the deceitfulness of your hearts, with counterfeit grace. There is never a grace but hath its counterfeit ; and there is nothing more common than to mistake counterfeit grace for true ; and remember you are undone for ever, if you should die in such a mistake. Not that I would shake the confidence of any sound believer, whose graces are of the right kind. Build your confidence sure. See that you get the certain marks of salvation, and make sure by great observing your own hearts that these

marks be in you, and then you cannot be too confident; but, as you love your souls, take heed of a groundless confidence. Take heed of being confident before you have tried. I would fain have you all secured against the day of judgment. I would that the state of your souls were all well settled. O how comfortably might you think of any troubles, if you were but sure of your pardons! I beseech you, whatever you neglect, look to this. I am afraid there are among you that have not made your peace with God; that are not yet acquainted with that great work of conversion. Such I charge, before the living God, to speed to CHRIST, and without any more delay to put away their iniquities, and deliver up themselves to JESUS CHRIST, that they may be saved. It is not your profession or external duties that will save you. No, no, you must be converted or condemned. It is not enough that you have some love to God's ways and people, and are willing to venture something for them; all this will not prove you sound Christians. Have your hearts been changed? Have you been soundly convinced of your sins? Of your damnable and undone condition? And your utter inability to lick yourselves whole by your own duties? Have you been brought to such a sense of sin, that there is no sin but you heartily abhor it? Are you brought to such a sense of the beauty of holiness, and of the laws and ways of God, that you desire to know the whole mind of God? Would not you excuse yourselves by ignorance from any duty, and that you do not allow yourselves in the neglect of any thing that conscience charges upon you as a duty? Are your very hearts set upon the glorifying and enjoying of God, as your greatest happiness? Had you rather be the holiest than be the richest and the greatest in the world? And is your greatest delight in the thoughts of your God, and in your conversings with God in holy exercises? Is CHRIST more precious than all the world to you? And are you willing, upon the thorough consideration of the strictness and holiness of his laws, to take them all for the rule of your thoughts, words, and actions; and though religion

may be dear, do you resolve, if God assist you, to go through with it, let the cost be what it will? Happy the man that is in such a case! This is a Christian, indeed; and whatever you be and do short of this, all is unsound. But you that bear in your souls the marks above-mentioned, upon you I should lay no other burden, but to hold fast and make good your ground, and to press forward towards the mark. Thankfully acknowledge the grace of God to your souls, and live rejoicingly in the hopes of the glory of God. Live daily in the praises of your Redeemer, and study the worthiness, excellency, and glory of his attributes. Let your souls be much taken up in contemplating his glorious perfection, and blessing yourselves in the goodly portion you have in him. Live like those that have a God, and then be disconsolate if you can. If there be not more in an infinite God to comfort you, than in a prison, or poverty or affliction to deject you, our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain. Let the thoughts of God be your daily repast, and never be satisfied till your hearts run out as freely, naturally, unweariedly after God as others do after the world. Farewell, my dear brethren! The LORD God Almighty be a protection to you, and your exceeding great reward. Farewell in the LORD. I am,

Yours in the bowels of the LORD JESUS,

JOSEPH ALLEINE

From the Common Gaol, at Juelchester,

September 11, 1663.

LETTER VII.

How to show love to Ministers, and live joyfully

To the most loving and dearly Beloved, my Christian Friends in Taunton, Grace, Mercy, and Peace from GOD our FATHER, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MOST ENDEARED BRETHREN,

I HAVE received your moving letter, and could not

look over *such* tender expressions without some commotion : I may confidently say, I spent more tears upon those lines, than ever you did ink. Your deep sense of my labours I cannot but thankfully acknowledge, yet withal, heartily confessing, that all was but what I owed to your immortal souls ; which, GOD knows, was very much short of my duty. The omissions, imperfections, deadness, that accompanied my duties I own, and the LORD humble me for them. But all that was of GOD (and that was all that was good) be sure that you give to GOD alone. To Him I humbly ascribe both the will and the deed, to whom alone be glory for ever.

My dear brethren, my business, as I have often told you, is not to turn your eyes to me, but to CHRIST: His spokesman I am ; will you give your hands, your names to him ? Will you subscribe to his laws, and consent to his offices, and be at defiance with all his enemies ? This do, and I have my errand. Who will follow CHRIST's colours ? Who will come under his banner ? This shall be the man that shall be my friend ; this is he that will oblige me for ever. Do these letters come to no loose sinner ? No ignorant sinner ? No unsound professor ? Would they do me a kindness, as I believe they would ? then let them come away to CHRIST ! O sinner, be no more in love with darkness ; stick no longer in the skirts and outside of religion ; waver no more, halt no further, but strike in throughly with JESUS CHRIST ; except nothing, reserve nothing, but come throughly to the LORD, and follow him fully. And then happy man thou shalt be, for thou wilt be made for ever ; and joyful man I shall be, for I shall save a soul from death. The earnest beggings of a poor prisoner, use to move some bowels : Hear O friends, will you do nothing for a Minister of CHRIST ? Nothing for a prisoner of JESUS CHRIST ? Methinks I hear you answer, ' Yea, what will we not do ? He shall never want while we have it ; he shall need no office of love, but we will run and ride to do it.' Yea, but this is not it that I beg of you : Will you gratify me indeed ? Then come in, bow to the name of

JESUS ; yea, let your souls bow, let all your powers do him homage. Let that sacred Name be graven into the substance of your hearts. Let me freely speak for Him, for He is worthy for whom you shall do this thing ; worthy to be beloved of you ; worthy to have your very hearts ; worthy to be admired, adored, praised, served, glorified to the uttermost by you, and every creature ; worthy for whom you should lay down all, leave all : Can any thing be too much for him ? Can any thing be too good for him, or too great for him ? Come, give up all, resign all, lay it at the feet of JESUS, offer all as a sacrifice to him ; see that you be universally the LORD's ; keep nothing from him : I know through the goodness of God, that with many of you this work is not yet to do ; but this set solemn resignation to the LORD is to be done more than once, and to be followed with an answerable practice when it is done : See that you walk worthy of the LORD ; but how ? In the "fear of the LORD," and in the "comfort of the HOLY GHOST ;" let these two go together. So shall you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour ; and experience the heavenly felicity of a Christian life : Cleave fast to CHRIST, never let go your hold ; cling the faster, because so many are labouring to loosen your hold. Hold fast your integrity, hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast to the end : If you do but keep your hold, and keep your way ; all that the world can do, and all that the powers of darkness can do, can never do you harm. Keep your own vineyard with constant care and watchfulness, and be sure that there be no inroad made upon your consciences, that the enemy do not get between your souls and God ; and then let what will assail you without, you need not fear : Let this be your daily exercise, to keep your consciences void of offence : Keep fair weather at home, however it be abroad. I would not only that you should walk "holily," but that you should walk "comfortably." I need say the less to this, because the fear of the LORD and the comfort of the HOLY GHOST, lie together. O, the provision God hath made for your continual comfort ! Dear brethren, do but understand your own blessedness, happy men that

you are, if you did but know and consider it : Who would count himself poor that hath all the fulness of the Godhead for his? O Christians, live like yourselves, live worthy of your portion, and your glorious prerogatives. That you may walk worthy of your glorious hopes, and live answerably to the mercies you have received, is the great desire of
Your souls' fervent well-wisher in bonds,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Prison at Juelchester,
September 18, 1663.



LETTER VIII.

Remember CHRIST Crucified; and Crucify Sin.

*To the Faithful and Well-beloved People, the Servants of
CHRIST in Taunton, Salvation.*

MOST DEAR CHRISTIANS,

I AM by office a Remembrancer, the LORD's Remembrancer for you, and your Remembrancer in the behalf of CHRIST. My business is, with the Apostle, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. And whom should I remember you of, but your Intercessor with the FATHER, who hath you always in remembrance, appearing in the presence of God for you? May his memory ever live in our hearts, though mine should die: O, remember his love more than wine, remember in what a case he found you, and yet nothing could divert the purpose of his love from you: He loathed not your rags nor your rottenness: He found you in loathsome filthiness, yet he pitied you, his bowels were moved, and his compassions were kindled, when one would have thought his wrath should have boiled and his indignation have burned down to hell against you: He loathed not but loved you, and washed you from your

sins in his own blood : Ah polluted captives ! Ah vile and putrid carcasses ! that the holy JESUS should his ownself wash you ; methinks I see him weeping over you ; and yet it was a more costly bath by which he cleansed you. Ah sinners ! look upon the streaming blood flowing from his blessed body, to fetch out the ingrained filthiness that you by sin had contracted. Alas ! what a horrid filthiness, that nothing but the blood of the covenant could wash away ! And what a love is CHRIST's, that, when a whole ocean could not wash nor purify us, would open every vein of his heart to do the work ! Look upon your crucified LORD : Do you not see a sacred stream flowing out of every member ? Ah, how those holy hands, those unerring feet, do run a stream to purge us ! Alas ! how the great drops of blood fall to the ground from his sacred face in his bitter agony, to wash and beautify ours ! How his wounded heart and side twice pierced, first with love and pity, and then with a soldier's cruelty, pour out their healthful and saving floods upon us ! LORD ! how do we forget such love as this ! Ah monsters of ingratitude, that can be unmindful of such a friend ? Do we thus requite him ? Is this our kindness to such an obliging Friend ? Christians, where are your affections ? To what use do you put your faculties ? What have you memories for, but to remember Him ? What have you the power of loving for, but that you should love Him ? Wherefore serves joy or desire, but to long for Him ? And delightfully embrace Him ? May your souls and all their powers be taken up with Him ; may all the doors of your souls be set open to Him. Here fix your thoughts, terminate here your desires ; here you may kindle your fire when almost out. Brethren, what will you do now for JESUS CHRIST ? Have you never a sacrifice to lay upon his altar ? Come and I will show you what you shall do, let your hands be in the blood of your sins, search them out with diligence, search your hearts and your houses ; whatever iniquities you find there, out with them, put them far from your tabernacles ; if you crucify them not,

you are not JESUS's friends. GOD forbid that there should be a lying tongue, or any way of deceit in your shops : That his service should give place to the world in your families. Far be it from any of you, my brethren, that you should be careful to teach your children and servants the way of your callings, and neglect to instruct them in the way of life. Is weekly catechising in every one of your families ? The LORD convince any one of you that may be guilty of this neglect : O, set up GOD in your houses ; and see that you be not slovenly in closet performances : Beware of serving the LORD negligently ; serve not the LORD with that which cost you nothing : Look to it that you content not yourselves with a cheap and easy religion. Put your flesh to it : Be well assured that the religion that costs you nothing will yield you nothing : Keep up the life of religion in your family and closet duties. Fear nothing like a customary and careless performance of GOD's service. Judge your ownselves whether lazy wishes, idle complaints, and yawning prayers are likely to carry you through the mighty difficulties that you must get through if ever you come to heaven. When you find yourselves going on in a listless, heartless course, ask yourselves, Is this to take the kingdom of heaven by violence ? See that you sacrifice yourselves to the LORD, that now you live to CHRIST himself. As CHRIST hath made over his life and death to you, so let it be your care to live and die to him : Labour to look upon all your enjoyments as CHRIST's goods ; upon your time, parts, strength, as his talents : Look upon yourselves only in the quality of servants and stewards that are to husband all these for your LORD's advantage, and as those that must give an account. And pray for me that I may take the counsel that I give. I bless the LORD, I want nothing but the opportunity of being serviceable to you : But I hope the LORD will make my bonds for you to be useful to your edification ; if I may glorify GOD, and serve you best by being here, I shall never wish to come out. Finally, brethren, farewell : Be perfect, be of good

comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. I am,

The ready servant of your Faith and Joy,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Prison at Juelchester,

October 14th, 1663.

LETTER IX.

On daily Self-Examination.

*To the most Beloved People, the Flock of CHRIST in Taunton,
Salvation.*

MOST DEAR BRETHREN,

BRETHREN, how stands it with you? Doth the main work go on? Do your souls prosper? This is my care; beware that you flag not, that you faint not now in the evil day. I understand that your dangers grow upon you; may your faith and courage grow much more abundantly.

Some of your enemies, I hear, are in great hopes to satisfy their desires upon you: Well, be not discouraged, my dear brethren, but bless the LORD who, of his abundant mercy, hath so remarkably preserved you so long beyond all expectation. Let it not be a strange thing to you, if the LORD doth now call you to some difficulty: Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is. I plainly see the coal of religion will soon go out, unless it have some better helps to cherish it, than a carnal Ministry and lifeless Administration. Dear brethren, now is the time for you that fear the LORD, to speak often one to another. Manage your duties with what prudence you can, but away with that carnal prudence that will decline duty to avoid danger.

I left you some helps for daily examination: I am jealous lest you should grow slack, or slight and careless in that

duty. Let me ask you in the name of the LORD, Doth never a day pass you, but you do solemnly and seriously call yourselves to an account, what your carriage hath been to God and men? Speak, conscience! Is there never an one within the hearing of this letter, that is a neglecter of this duty? Doth every one of your consciences acquit you? Oh that they did! Tell me, would not some of you be put shrewdly to it, if I should ask you when you read or thought over the questions that were given you for your help? Would you not be put to a blush, to give me an answer? And will you not be much more ashamed, that God should find you tardy? Not that I would necessarily bind you up to that very method; only till you have found a way more profitable, I would desire you, yea, I cannot but charge you, to make daily use of that. Awake conscience, and do thou fall upon that soul that thou findest careless in this work, and never let him be at rest till thou canst witness for him, that he is a *daily and strict observèr of himself*, and doth live in the constant practice of this duty. What! Shall neither God's charge, nor your profit hold you to your work? Yet I may not doubt, but some of you do daily perform this duty. The LORD encourage you in it; yet give me leave to ask you what you have gained? Are you grown more universally conscientious, more strict, more humble, and more sensible of your many and great defects, than you were before? If so, blessed are you of the LORD; if otherwise, this duty hath been performed but slightly by you. What can you say to this question? Doth your care of your ways abate, or doth increase, by the constant use of this duty? If it abate, remember from whence you are fallen, and repent; as good not do it at all, as not to the purpose.

The LORD GOD be a Sun and a Shield to you. My most dear love to you all. Fare you well in the LORD: I am,

Your Ambassador in bonds,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Common Gaol at Juelchester,

October 20, 1663.

LETTER X.

Motives and Marks of Growth.

*To the most Loving and best Beloved, the servants of CHRIST
in Taunton, Grace and Peace.*

MOST DEAR AND TENDER FRIENDS,

WHOSE I am, and whom under GOD I desire to serve; to build you up in holiness and comfort, hath been through grace my great ambition. This is that which I laboured for; this is that which I suffer for; and in short the end of all my applications to you, and to GOD for you. How do your souls prosper? Are they in a thriving case? What progress do you make in sanctification? Doth the house of SAUL grow weaker and weaker, and the house of DAVID stronger and stronger? Beloved, I am jealous of you with a godly jealousy, lest any of you should lose ground in in these declining times: And therefore cannot but be often calling upon you to look to your standing, and to watch and hold fast, that no man take your crown. Ah! How surely shall you reap in the end, if you faint not! Take heed therefore that you lose not the things you have wrought, but as you have begun well, so go on in the strength of CHRIST, and give diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end.

Do you need motives? 1. How much are you behind hand? O the fair advantages that we have lost! What time, what sabbaths, sermons, sacraments, are upon the matter lost? How much work have we yet to do? Are you sure of heaven yet? Are you fit to die yet? Surely they that are under so many great wants, had need to set upon some more thriving courses.

Secondly. Consider what others have gained, whilst we, it may be, sit down by the loss. Have we not met many vessels richly laden, while our souls are empty? O the golden prizes that some have won? While we have folded

the hands to sleep, have not many of our own standing in religion left us far behind them?

Thirdly. Consider you will all find little enough when you come to die. The wise among the virgins have no oil to spare at the coming of the Bridegroom. Temptation and death will put all your graces to it. How much ado have many had at last to put into this harbour! DAVID cries for respite till he had recovered a little more strength.

Fourthly. Consider how short your time for gathering in probably is? The Israelites gathered twice *so much manna against the Sabbath as they did at other times, because at that time there was no manna fell. Brethren, you know not how long you have to lay in for.

Do you ask for marks how you may know your souls to be in a thriving case?

First. If your appetites be more strong. Do you thirst after God, and after grace, more than heretofore? Do your cares for and desire after the world abate? And do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Whereas you were wont to come with an ill will to holy duties, do you come to them as an hungry stomach to its meat?

Secondly. If your pulses beat more even. Are you still off and on, hot and cold? Or is there a more even-spun thread of holiness through your whole course? Do you make good the ground from which you were formerly often beaten off?

Thirdly. If you do look more to the carrying on together the duties of both tables. Do you not only look to the keeping of your own vineyards, but do you lay out yourselves for the good of others, and are filled with zealous desires for their conversion and salvation? Do you manage your talk and your trade by the rules of religion?

Do you eat and sleep by rule? Doth religion form and mould, and direct your carriage towards husband, wife, parents, children, masters, servants? Do you grow more universally conscientious? Is piety more diffusive than ever with you, doth it come more abroad with you, out of your closets, into your houses, your shops, your fields?

Doth it journey with you, and buy and sell for you? Hath it the casting voice in all you do?

Fourthly. If the duties of religion be more delightful to you. Do you take more delight in the word than ever? Are you more in love with secret prayer, and more abundant in it? Cannot you be content with your ordinary seasons, but are ever and anon making extraordinary visits to heaven? And upon all occasions turning aside to talk with God in some short ejaculations? Are you often darting up your soul heavenwards? Is it meat and drink for you to do the will of God? Do you come off more freely with God, and answer his calls with more readiness of mind?

Fifthly. If you are more abundant in those duties which are most displeasing to the flesh. Are you more earnest in mortification? Are you more strict and severe than ever in the duty of daily self-examination and holy meditation? Do you hold the reins harder upon the flesh than ever? Do you keep a stricter watch upon your appetites? Do you set a stronger guard upon your tongues? Have you a more jealous eye upon your hearts?

Sixthly. If you grow more vile in your own eyes. Do you grow more out of love with men's esteem, set less by it? Are you not marvellous tender of being slighted? Can you rejoice to see others preferred before you? Can you heartily value and love them that think meanly of you?

Seventhly. If you grow more quick of sense, more sensible of Divine influences or withdrawals. Are you more afraid of sin than ever? Are your sins a greater pain to you than heretofore? Are your very infirmities your great afflictions? And the daily workings of corruption a continual grief of mind to you?

I must conclude abruptly, commending you to God, and can only tell you that I am,

Yours in the LORD JESUS,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Common Gaol at Juelchester,

October 31, 1663.

LETTER XI.

*To my dearly Beloved, the Inhabitants of Taunton, Grace,
Mercy, and Peace, from GOD our FATHER, and the LORD
JESUS CHRIST.*

MOST DEARLY BELOVED,

I HAVE been, through mercy, many years with you, and should be willingly so many years a prisoner for you, so I might further your salvation. I must again and again thank you for your abundant affections to me, which I value as a great mercy, not in order to myself, but in order to your benefit, that I may thereby be a more likely instrument of your good. Surely, so much as I value your love, yet had I rather be forsaken of you all and buried in oblivion, so that your eyes and hearts might be fixed on CHRIST, and sincerely engaged to him. Brethren, I have not bespoken your affections for myself: O that I might win your hearts to CHRIST. O that I might convert you to him though you were diverted from me. I should much rather choose to be hated of all, so this might be the means to have CHRIST set up savingly in the hearts of you all: And indeed there is nothing great but in order to God; nothing is considerable as it is terminated in us. It matters not whether we are in riches or poverty, sickness or health, in honour or disgrace, so CHRIST may be by us magnified in the condition we are in. Welcome prison and poverty, welcome scorn and envy, welcome pains or contempt, if by these God's glory may be promoted. What are we for but for God? What doth the creature signify separated from his God? Why just so much as the cypher separated from the figure: We are nothing worth but in reference to God and his ends. Better were it that we had never been, than that we should not be to him. Better that we were dead than that we should live, and not to him. Better that we had no understandings, than that we should not know him. Better that we were blocks and brutes, than that we

should not use our reason for him. What are our interests unless as they may be subservient to his interest? Or our reputation, unless we may hereby glorify him? Do you love me?

I know you do ; but who is there that will leave his sins for me? With whom shall I prevail to give up himself in strictness and self-denial to the LORD? Who will be intreated by me to set upon neglected duties, or reform accustomed sins? O wherein may you rejoice me? In this, in this, my brethren, in this you shall befriend me, if you obey the voice of God by me, if you be prevailed with to give yourselves up throughly to the LORD? Would you lighten my burden? Would you make glad my heart? Let me hear of your owning the ways and the servants of the LORD in adversity, of your patient continuing in the ways of holiness. O that I could but hear that the prayerless souls, the prayerless families among you, were now given to prayer! That the profane sinners were awakened, and induced by the preaching of these bonds, to leave their drunkenness, their loose company, their deceit, and wantonness! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? How long shall the patience of God wait for you? How long shall the LORD JESUS stretch out his hands toward you? O sinners, cast yourselves into his arm! Why should you die? Why will you forsake your own mercy? Will you perish when mercy wooes you? Confess and forsake your sins, and you shall find mercy. Will you sell your souls to perdition for a little ease and delight to your flesh, or a little of the gain of unrighteousness? Why, these are the things that part between sinners and CHRIST.

I know many are spun with a finer thread, and are not so far from the kingdom of God. But I must again warn you of staying in the suburbs of the City of Refuge. O what pity is it that any should perish at the gates! That any should escape the pollutions of the world, and do many things, yea, and suffer too, and yet fall short of the glory of God! O ye halting Christians, that halt between

CHRIST and the world, that are, as EPHRAIM, like a cake not turned, dough-baked; professors, that have lamps without oil, that cry, "Lord, Lord," but do not the will of our FATHER which is in heaven! How long will you stay in the place of the breaking forth of children, and stick between the womb and the world? Your religion will carry you from the profane, and ye own the people of the LORD. Therefore all is well! I tell you, godliness is a heart-work, it goes deep, and spreads far: Unless the frame of your hearts, and the drift of your course be changed, unless you be universally conscientious, and unreservedly delivered up to the LORD for all times, and conditions, whatever be the cost, you are none of CHRIST's, how far soever you go in external performances. Hear then, O people, and let not an almost Christianity deceive you, or ignorance carry you blindfold to perdition. O, the thousands, and ten thousands that have been undone by one of these! Ah, how often have you been warned against them, lest you should split against these dangerous rocks. O Taunton, Taunton, how often would God's servants have gathered you, and you would not? Many, very many of you would not. But will you now? Will you *yet* come in? I cannot forbear once more, even out of the prison, to call after poor sinners, and make one tender of mercy more. O come to the waters of life, wash you, make you clean.

But for you whose hearts are set against every sin, and are resolved for God and holiness; you that experience a thorough change, and have respect to all God's commandments, who will have none but God for your happiness, none but CHRIST for your Treasure, that must and will have him, come what will come, blessed are you of the LORD: O happy souls, rejoice in the LORD, and again, I say, Rejoice: Let your souls magnify the LORD, and your spirits rejoice in God your Saviour. Live you a life of praise, you are highly favoured of the LORD, your lines are fallen in a pleasant place: Only stick to your choice: Beware lest any man beguile you of your reward: Watch

and keep your garments about you, lest you walk naked, and men see your shame. Many will be plucking to pull you out of CHRIST's hands; but the harder they pluck, the harder do you cling, and cleave to him: Blessed is he that overcometh.

And now the God of heaven fill you all with himself, and make all grace to abound in you, and toward you. May he be a Sun to comfort you, and shine with his beams of grace and glory on you all: Farewell in the LORD. I am,

Yours in the bonds of the Gospel,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

August 28, 1663.



LETTER XII.

How to live to God.

To the Beloved People, the Inhabitants of Taunton, Grace and Peace.

MOST ENDEARED CHRISTIANS,

BELoved, I am, without a compliment, the devoted servant of your souls' prosperity: May the LORD JESUS be set up in your hearts; may his name ever live in you, and I have what I ask. If this work be not promoted among you, I shall account all my pains but lost labour. Brethren, I beseech you, that none of you live to yourselves, for this were directly to cross the end of CHRIST's death; for therefore he died that you should not live to yourselves. O live to him that died for you! Live to him that is the God of your life! Live to him that bought your lives with his own! To him that bought you from destruction, and not only so, but bought you the eternal inheritance. Will a man be easily persuaded to lose his life? How infinitely tender are men here! And yet the most of men do lose their lives, yea, lose them for nothing. Beloved,

consider, I beseech you, that life is lost, that is not lived unto God. If you would not lose your lives that you live, live to him who is the end of your lives. O remember this, and reckon that day lost which you have not lived unto God! Brethren, how great a part of our lives have we lost? I beseech you, take heed; you are careful about many things, but beware that other things do not put out this, the spending your days and strength for him that made you. Would it not be dreadful for a man to find at last when he comes to his account with God, that his whole life, or at least the main of it, had been but damnable self-seeking? That a man should have so many years allowed him by God, and he should at last be found to have been a wicked servant that had set up for himself with his Master's stock, and alienated his goods? Well, that you may thoroughly learn the grand lesson of living to God, take these counsels:

First. Settle it in your heart that it is the sum of all your business and blessedness to live unto God: It is your *business*, for his pleasure you are and were created: What have you to do but to serve your Maker in your general and particular callings? Beloved, what else have you strength for, but for God? Doth he maintain servants, and shall not he look for their work? Would you endure it that the servants you find with meat and wages, should set up for themselves? Beloved, God's service is your business, and he made you and keeps you for no other end. And it is your *blessedness* too. Labour to be under the rooted conviction of this, that your happiness lies in pleasing and honouring God. Let the sense of this live fresh upon your hearts, and it will regulate your whole course.

Secondly. Labour to keep alive in yourselves a deep sense of your strong obligations to God. Often think with yourselves, what a reasonable thing it is, that you should, with all you have, serve the LORD. Beloved, shall not the vessel be for the use of the Potter that made it? Shall not the servant trade for his Master with whose goods he is intrusted? Do you not fetch all your bread from God's

door? Is not he the Author of your being and well-being? Is it not from him that you fetch every breath? Your interest obliges you to please him. Why should BELSHAZZAR's charge be against you? that the God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified. (*Dan. v. 23.*)

Thirdly. Every morning let this be your first and firm resolution, I will set forth this day in the Name of God: Your first and last thoughts are of greatest consequence, and therefore I advise you to begin and end with this: Whenever you lie down, say in yourselves, I will make use of my bed as an ordinance of God, that I may be refreshed and fitted for his work: Whenever you rise up, think, I will spend this day for God, and follow the business of my calling, because I am so appointed by God.

Beloved, I design the sweetness and comfort, as well as strictness of your lives. Live to God as you are directed, and you shall marvellously prosper in both. I am not sure yet, whether or no I shall see you at the Assizes. I leave all things to our FATHER's wise disposal, and commending you to God, I rest

Yours in the bonds of the LORD JESUS,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Prison at Juelchester,

November 14, 1663.



LETTER XIII.

*To the Beloved People, the Flock of God in Taunton,
Grace and Peace.*

MOST DEAR FRIENDS, AND BRETHREN,

I HAVE sent these few lines, to beseech you by these bonds which I gladly endure for your sakes, to hold forth, and hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering. The LORD make you steadfast in the Holy Doctrine wherein you have been taught. I have not shunned to declare unto

you the whole counsel of God. O remember that by the space of eight years, I ceased not to warn you every one, and kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have taught you publicly, and from house to house, warning every man, and teaching every man, that I might present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS.

You that have taken upon you the profession of strict godliness, I shall only press you to press towards the mark. You have much work to do, and God hath given you no time to loiter in. I beseech you to put on. That person that sits down when he hath gotten to that pitch that he thinks will bring him to heaven, is never likely to come thither; grace is one of those things that saith, it never hath enough. Let me urge upon you the Apostle's counsel, "Follow after holiness."

First. Holiness is the choicest ornament: It is an adorning in the sight of God, of great price. It is the glory of God, and will you count it your shame? (*Exod.* xv.) God is glorious in holiness, and grace is called glory. (*2 Cor.* iii, 18.) Yet we may now cry out as the Psalmist, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?" (*Psalms* iv, 2.) But be of good comfort, the shame of holiness is real glory.

Secondly. Holiness is the safest defence: Grace is not only for ornament, but for use. Righteousness is a breast-plate that keeps the vitals, and is a sure defence from any mortal wounds. When the politicians have done their best, it is he that walketh uprightly, that walketh surely. (*Prov.* x, 19.) "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me," saith DAVID. I desire to be no longer safe than these can preserve me; when I must let go my integrity or my safety, I will choose the danger rather than the sin; and yet will never doubt but my integrity will save me harmless. Never persuade me that that man chooses wisely, who runs upon the displeasure of God, to flee man's displeasure. Did you ever hear of a man so mad as to run upon the sword's point, to avoid the scratch of a pin? Why this is the wisdom of the distracted world, who will sin rather than

suffer, and, to save themselves harmless in the world, will run upon God, even upon the thick bosses of his buckler.

Thirdly. Holiness will be found to be your real happiness : Eat of this tree, and you shall be indeed as God. Godliness is God's likeness. The beauty of holiness is his very image ; sin is the disease of which holiness is the cure. O what peace and tranquillity doth holiness work in the mind ! “ Great peace have they that love thy commandments, and nothing shall offend them.” In a word, holiness is the perfection of man's nature, the communication of the Divine nature, the earnest of glory, and the very entrance of heaven.

Let me say to every one of you, as our Saviour to MARTHA, “ Believest thou this ? ” If you do, live like believers, and do you follow after holiness as others follow their trades or studies. Let religion be your business, and not a thing by the by : Follow as hard after grace, as if you did indeed believe riches and honour were in it. Let holiness sit on your lips, and season all your speech with grace. Profess it, own it, plead stoutly for it, be advocates for holiness, in an adulterous and wicked generation ; wear it as a robe of honour, when the world cast their reproaches at you for it : Let it dwell in your hearts : Let it adorn your houses : Let it be your companion in your closets : Let it travel with you in your journies : Let it lie down and rise up with you : Let it close your eyes in the evening, and call you out of your beds in the morning. Be you the votaries of holiness : Keep her, and she shall keep you.

Because I know you love to hear of my welfare, I must tell you that goodness and mercy follow me perpetually every day, and every night. Glory to God in the highest. Dear brethren, Fare you well in the LORD. I am

Your devoted Servant in the Gospel, whether a Bondman, or a Free,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the common Gaol at Juelchester,

December 3, 1663.

LETTER XIV.

To the Flock of Christ in Taunton, Grace and Peace.

MOST ENDEARED FRIENDS,

I WOULD have you count nothing as certain but CHRIST's love and care. This you may build upon: You need not fear lest time and distance should wear out the remembrance of you with Him: Do any of you question whether you are so happy as to have your names recorded above? I shall bring it to a speedy issue: Do you question whether CHRIST hath taken your names? whether you are upon his heart? Let me ask you, Is heaven upon your hearts? Is the name of JESUS deeply engraved upon your souls? Is his image and superscription there? If you find that heaven is the main of your cares, that your hearts are set upon it as your home and your country; and that it is your business to seek it and secure it; if your hearts be upon heaven, your names are unquestionably written in heaven. Again, hath CHRIST recorded his name in your hearts? Is the name of JESUS, the beloved name with you? Precious above all; next to your hearts? Is there no other name under heaven so dear and sweet to you? What room hath CHRIST in you? If any thing be deeper in your hearts than he is, you are unsound. As the FATHER hath given him, so do your hearts give him a name above every name: Is CHRIST uppermost with you in your affection? Then rejoice and leap for joy, your names are most precious with CHRIST if his name be above all dear to you. Once more, Hath CHRIST drawn out his own similitude upon you? Is CHRIST within you? Doth he dwell in your hearts? Then be sure you have a room in his heart: The image of CHRIST is in holiness. Is this that which your very hearts are set upon? Do you thirst for holiness? Do you follow after holiness? Do you prize it above all prosperity and worldly greatness? Do you hate every sin and long to be rid of it as your most irksome burden, and

use all God's means against it as far as you know them? If it be thus with you, CHRIST hath set his stamp upon your hearts, and hath set you as a seal upon his heart.

Rejoice then, O Christians, and bless yourselves, in being under CHRIST's care. Fear not, little flock; stronger is he that is with you, than he that is against you: What though SATAN should raise all his militia against you? adhere to CHRIST, doing and suffering his pleasure, and he shall secure you: The LORD will not forsake you, because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people: Many will be plucking at you, but fear not, He hath all power. Can Omnipotence secure you? He is all treasure. Can unsearchable riches suffice you? In a word, He is all fulness. Can fulness fill you? If so, you are blessed and shall be blessed.

Beloved, we lose unutterably for want of considering our own privileges and blessedness. O man, is CHRIST thine, and yet dost thou live at a low rate? Is thy name written in heaven, and yet dost thou not rejoice? Shall the children of the kingdom, the candidates of glory, the chosen generation, be like other men? O Christians, remember who and whence you are, consider your obligations, bestir yourselves, run and wrestle, and be strong for the LORD of hosts, (and earnestly, yet peaceably,) contend for the faith once delivered to his saints. What, shall we make nothing of all that God hath said and done for us? O Christians, shall he that hath obtained the King's patent for an Earldom, glory in his riches and honour? And shall the grant of heaven signify little with thee? Or CHRIST's patent for thy sonship and partnership with himself be like a cypher? Shall HAMAN come home from the banquet with a glad heart, glorying in the greatness of his riches, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him? And shall we find it under God's own hand, that he intends the kingdom for us, that he will be a Father to us, that he gives and grants all his infinite perfections to us, and yet not be moved? Christians, live like yourselves, let the world see that the promises of God and privileges of

the Gospel are not empty sounds. Let the heavenly cheerfulness, and the restless diligence, and the holy raisedness of your conversations, prove the reality, excellency, and beauty of your religion. See that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Remember with trembling, "To whom much is given, of him much shall be required." With my most dear loves to you all, I commend you to your Father and my Father, your God and my God, remaining

Yours in all manner of obligations,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the common Gaöl at Juelchester,

January 20, 1663.

LETTER XV.

What do you more than others?

*To the most dearly Beloved, the Servants of God in
Taunton, Grace and Peace.*

MOST LOVING AND ENTIRELY BELOVED,

YOU are a great joy to me. I know not what thanks to render to the LORD for you, when I hear of your constancy and fidelity and zeal, in adhering to him and his ways, even in such a time as this; you are highly favoured. Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, that he hath regarded the low estates of his servants: That he should ever indulge you as he hath, and hover over you, even as the eagle stirreth up her nest, and fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; for so hath the LORD your God dealt with you: He hath kept you as the apple of his eye; and since the streams of Cherith were dried up, yet to this day he hath not suffered the handful of meal to waste, nor the oil in the cruise to fail, but hath continually provided for you. How should I love and bless the LORD for this his great grace

towards you ! Now I beseech you, my brethren, that you consider the kindness of the LORD ; for the LORD your God is he that careth for you, and that you love the LORD your God, and fear him for ever, for he is your life, and the length of your days. And as JOB had a holy fear of his children, lest they should have offended, so I am jealous of you with a godly jealousy, lest any of you should receive this grace of God in vain. I must not cease to put you in mind, that GOD doth look for no small matter from you. Remember my charge, that there be not a barren tree nor a dwarf Christian among you, where the LORD soweth much, he expects to reap accordingly. Whose account, my beloved, is like to be so great as yours ? O look about you, and think of the Master coming to reckon with you for his talents ; when he will expect no small increase. Beloved, what can you do ? How much are you grown ? What spoil have you made upon your corruptions ? What progress in grace ?

Suppose CHRIST should put the awakening question to you, “ What do you more than others ? ” GOD doth expect more of his people, than of any others in the world : And well he may. For

First. He hath bestowed more on them than on others : Now where much is given, much shall be required. Can you think of that without trembling ? He hath bestowed on them singular love : Thee only have I known of all the families on earth. And he looks that his love should be a constraining argument to obedience. Again, he hath laid out a singular care for his people, more than for others : He cares for no men, for nothing in all the world, in comparison of them. He reproveth Kings for their sakes. He will give nations, and kingdoms for their ransom. So precious are they in his sight, and so dearly beloved, that he will give men for them, and people for their life. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous ; he will not endure them out of his sight. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and first the eye of his more accurate observation : GOD can wink at others as it were, and overlook what

they do with little notice ; but he hath a most curious eye upon his people, he marketh their steps, and booketh their words, he weigheth their actions, and pondereth all their goings. And should they not walk more cautiously than any alive, that are under so exact an eye ? Secondly, the eye of special care and protection. Behold the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him : I will guide thee with mine eye : And should not they be infinitely tender and careful how to please the LORD, who have his singular care laid out on them ? In short, GOD hath bestowed on them singular privileges : These are a peculiar treasure to him above all people, a kingdom of Priests, a holy nation ; they dwell alone, they are diverse from all people. When the whole world lies in wickedness, these are called and chosen, and faithful, washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our God. The rest are the refuse ; these the jewels. Shall not God's Priests be clothed with righteousness, and shall not Princes live above the rate of peasants ?

Secondly. He hath entrusted them with more than others : Not only with the talents of his grace, (for the increase whereof they must give a strict account,) but also with the jewel of his glory. How tenderly should they walk, that are entrusted with such a jewel ? Remember, your Maker's glory is bound up in your fruitful walking.

Thirdly. He hath qualified them more than others. He hath put into them a principle of life, having quickened them together with CHRIST. He hath set up a light in their minds, when others lie in darkness. He hath given them other aids, than others have, even his SPIRIT to help their infirmities, when others lie like vessels that are wind-bound, and cannot stir.

Fourthly. He hath provided for them other manner of things than for others. These are the little flock to whom it is his good pleasure to give the kingdom : Great are the preparations for them. The FATHER hath prepared the kingdom for them from the foundations of the world : The SON is gone to heaven on purpose to prepare a place for

them: The SPIRIT is preparing them, and making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: And should these be like other people?

Brethren, God and men expect you should do more than others, see that you be indeed singular. For

1. If you do no more for God than others, he will do more against you than others: You only have I known, therefore will I punish you. The barren tree in the vineyard must be cut down, whereas had it been in the common it might have stood much longer. God looketh for grapes from his vineyard, on which he had bestowed such care more than ordinary; but when they bring forth wild grapes, he will lay them waste in a worse manner than the forest.

2. If you do no more than others, you must look for no more than others. If you should put off God with a common obedience, you must expect to be put off with common mercies.

3. Except you do more than others, God will be dishonoured more by you than others.

And truly, as God looks for more from his own than others, so he looks for more from you than others, even of his own, because he hath done more: See that you be shining Christians, that you be strong in the grace of God, that you press towards the mark. But I must conclude; I give my love among you all, being able to add no more, but that I am

Yours in fervent love and longings,
JOSEPH ALLEINE.



LETTER XVI.

To the Servants of God in Taunton, Salvation.

MOST ENDEARED CHRISTIANS,

I AM yours, and love to be so, being ambitious not to have dominion over your faith, but to be a helper of your

joy. CHRIST's officers are so your rulers in the LORD, as yet to preach not themselves, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and themselves your servants for JESUS's sake. I have no greater felicity under God than to serve the good of souls. Brethren, how fares it with your souls? Are they in health? Do they prosper? It is a joy to me to hear when your trade flourishes; but these are very little things if we look into eternity. Brethren, my ambition for you is, that you should be cedars among the shrubs; that from you should sound out the word of the LORD, and that in every place your faith to God-ward should be spread abroad. That ye should be as a field that the LORD hath blessed. That you should not only have the name, but the spirit, life, power, heat, growth, vigour of Christianity among you. Let not Taunton only have the name to live; but see to it, that the kingdom of God be with you. O that every one of your souls might be a Temple of God! O that every one of your families might be a Church of God! Beloved, look to it that every one that nameth the name of CHRIST among you depart from iniquity, secret as well as open, of the heart as well as of the life. Let no man think that to make an outcry upon the *wickedness of the times*, will serve his turn. Many go to hell in the company of the wise virgins. That no man may be a *self-deceiver*, let every man be a *self-searcher*. He that keeps no day-book in his shop, and no account in his conscience, his estate and his soul will thrive both alike. Beloved, I would that you should remember whither you are going. If a man be, after a few months, to be transported into another country, never to return, he will send over whatever he can, and make the best provision he may against he comes into that country. Brethren, you are strangers and pilgrims here, and have but a few months' stay in this country; see that you traffic much with heaven. CHRIST is our common factor. O send over to him what possibly you can. Give alms plentifully; pray continually; be much in meditation and consideration; reckon with yourselves daily; walk with God in your callings; do all the

duties of your relations as unto GOD : Live not one day to yourselves, but unto CHRIST, so shall you be continually transporting into another world, and laying up treasure in heaven : And O the blessed store that you shall find there after a few years' diligence ! Beloved, while you are here in this world, you are but like a merchant's ship in a strange port ; the day for your return is set, and you are to stay no longer than till your freight is ready. Be wise, know your season, improve your time, you are made or marred for ever, as you speed in this one voyage. There is no returning to this country to mend a bad market. GOD will call in all his talents ; time shall be no longer. O come in, come and buy now, while the market is open, that you who want may have grace, and you that have may have it more abundantly. Go and plead with the LORD JESUS, that he hath bid you "come, buy and eat," without money and without price ; that he hath counselled you to come buy of Him, gold, raiment, and eye-salve. Tell him you are come according to his call, and wait upon him for grace, for righteousness, for light, and instruction. Lay hold on his word, plead it, live upon it. He is worthy to be believed, worthy to be trusted, go out of yourselves to him, unlearn yourselves. There is a threefold foot that we naturally stand upon ; our own wisdom, our own righteousness, and our own strength. These three feet must be cut off, and we must learn to have no subsistence but in CHRIST, and to stand only on his bottom. Study the excellent lesson of self-denial, self-annihilation. A true Christian is like a vine, that cannot stand of itself, but is wholly supported by the prop it leans on. It is no small thing to know ourselves to be nothing, of no might, of no worth, of no understanding ; to look upon ourselves as helpless, worthless, foolish, empty shadows. This holy littleness is a great matter ; when we find that all our inventory amounts to nothing but folly, weakness, and beggary ; when we set down ourselves for cyphers, our gain for loss, our excellencies for very vanities, then we shall learn to live like believers. A true Saint is like a glass without a foot, that

set him where you will, is ready to fall every way till you set him to a prop. Let CHRIST be the only support you lean on. When you are thoroughly emptied, and see all comeliness to be but as a withered flower, dead, dried, past recovery, then you will be put upon the happy necessity of going out to CHRIST for all.

I can add no more but my prayers to my counsels, and so commending you to GOD, and the word of grace, I rest,
 The fervent well-willer of your souls,
 JOSEPH ALLEINE.



LETTER XVII.

To the Servants of GOD in Taunton, Salvation.

MOST ENDEARED CHRISTIANS,

I SEND you a few prison counsels.

1. To improve for eternity the advantages of your present state. Though you are at many disadvantages with respect to the public ordinances, yet you have many most happy privileges. O what a mercy have you, that you may serve GOD while you will in your families! That you may be as much as you will with GOD in secret prayer, and holy meditation, and self-examination! I beseech you consider what a blessing you have above others, that have your health, and a competency, and are free from those heart-eating cares that others are disabled by, from looking after GOD and their souls. O consider what a blessed seed-time you have for eternity! Now be wise, and improve your happy season. Prepare for death. Make all sure. Press on towards the mark. Lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against time to come. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withdraw not your hand. Treasure up much in heaven. What profit is it that you have more than others? More liberty, more comfort, more health, more wealth, except you love GOD more, and serve

him better than others? Now ply your work, and despatch your business, so as that you may have nothing to trouble you upon your death-beds.

2. To consider also the disadvantages of your state. Study to know your own weakness, and where your danger lies, that you may obviate SATAN, and prevent your mis-carrying. There is no condition but hath its snares. See that ye acquaint yourselves with his devices, lest you be beguiled by him, through your own unwariness. You that are well provided for in the world had need to watch yourselves, lest you fall in love with present things, lest you be lifted up, lest you trust in those carnal props, and put confidence in the creatures, lest you warp and decline, and baulk your duties through the desire of preserving your estates. You that have little in the world, are not without your temptations. O take heed of envying others' prosperity, of murmuring and discontent, of diffidence and distrustfulness, of using indirect means to help yourselves. Be sure you make not any pressures an excuse from your daily serving God in your families, and in secret. Set this down as your rule and unchangeable resolution, that God and your souls and your families shall be looked duly and continually after, go the world which way it will. Consider what sins your tempers, relations, callings most expose you to. Be not strangers to yourselves. Prove yourselves upright in keeping from your iniquities.

3. To converse often with your dust. Brethren, we are going: The grave waiteth for us. O forget not that corruption is your father, and the worm your mother and your sister! These are your kindred that you must shortly dwell with, when you come to your long home. Remember the days of darkness, which shall be many. Take every day some serious turns with death. Think where you shall be a few days hence. Happy he that knew not what to-morrow meant for twenty years together. Believe it, you will find it no little thing to die. Think often how you are provided. Were you never within sight of death? How did it look? What did you wish for most at that time?

What did then trouble you most ? O mark these things, and live accordingly. Often ask your hearts, ‘ What, if God should this night require my soul ? ’

4. To serve your generation with your might while you have time. You have but a very little time to bring God any glory here, or to do your friends any good. Now up and be doing. Now or never live in the deep and constant sense of the very little time that you have for this world, and the great work you have to do. You are going whence you shall not return. There is no after-game to be played. What ! But one cast for eternity, and will you not be careful to throw that well ?

Most dearly beloved, I covet after your furtherance in mortification, and growth in grace. And O, that I could but represent death unto you, as it will show shortly itself : Or could I but open a window into eternity to you : How effectually would this do the work ! Then the cripple would fling away his crutches, the slothful would pluck his hand out of his bosom, and shake off his excuses, and be night and day at his work. Then the Laodicean would be recovered from his benumbed frame ; then we should have no halving in religion, no lazy wishing and complaining ; but men would ply the oars to purpose, and sweat at their work.

Brethren, lift up yourselves above the objects of sense : Be men for eternity, and carry it like those that seek for glory, honour, and immortality. I commend you to Divine grace ; and am

Your’s in the bonds of the Gospel of our LORD JESUS,
JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the common Gaol at Juelchester,

March 5, 1665.

LETTER XVIII.

*To the loving and most beloved People, the Servants of God
in Taunton, Grace and Peace.*

MOST DEARLY BELOVED,

ALTHOUGH I am forced at the present, to be at a distance from you, yet I would not have you ignorant, that the care of your eternal welfare is always living upon my heart. Therefore as my beloved friends I warn you, and cease not to stir you up by way of remembrance, being jealous for you with a godly jealousy, that no man take your crown. I know you have many enemies, and above all, I fear your bosom enemies: And as the watchman of the LORD, I give you careful warning, and exhort you all not to be high-minded, but fear. Blessed is the man that feareth always. Look diligently, lest any of you fail of the grace of GOD. You have made long profession of the Name of JESUS CHRIST: O, see upon what ground you stand. You must every one of you stand shortly before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, and be tried for your lives: O, try yourselves thoroughly first. It is easy to mistake a partial reformation and external obedience, for true sanctification. Therefore I beseech you every one, to examine whether you are in the faith. Prove your own selves. Tell not me, you hope you are sincere, you hope you shall go to heaven: Never put it off with hopes, but pray, and try, and search, till you know you are passed from death to life, and that you know you have a building, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Suppose I should ask you one by one, Where are your evidences for heaven? Could you make out your claim? Can you bring Scripture proof? Can you show me the marks of the LORD JESUS? What mean you to live at uncertainties? Brethren, it is an intolerable ignorance for any of you in these days of glorious light, not to be able to tell the distinguishing marks of a sound believer. And it is intolerable carelessness, if you do not bring yourselves to

the trial by these marks. What! are your hands filled with books, and your ears with sermons, that tell you so plainly from the Word of God, how you shall know whether you are in CHRIST, and are you still to seek? O, stir up yourselves. Take heed, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you fall short of it at last. You are a professing people, you pray, and you hear; but, O look to your sincerity. Look to your principles, look to your ends, else you may lose all at last. Examine, not only what is done, but whence it is done, look to the roots as well as to the fruit. Eye not only your actions, but your aims. Remember what a strict eye you are under. The LORD JESUS makes strict observation upon all your works and ways. He observes who of you are fruitful, and who barren and unprofitable. He knows who are thriving and who declining. He observes who are warm, and who lukewarm: Who are sound Christians, and who have only a name to live.

Christians, put on, press towards the mark, be adding "to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge." See that you grow extensively, being abundant in all sorts of good works. Be pitiful, be courteous, gentle, easy to be entreated. Be slow to anger, soon reconciled. Be patient, be temperate, be cheerful. Study not every one only his own things, but the good of his neighbour. Think it not enough to look to your own souls, but watch for the souls of others. Pray for them, warn them, be kind to them, study to oblige them, that by any means you may win them, and gain their souls.

Labour to grow intensively, to do better the things that you did before, to be more fervent in prayer, more free and willing in all the ways of the LORD, to hear with more profit, to examine yourselves more thoroughly, to mind heaven more frequently.

I commend myself to your prayers, and you to the grace of God, remaining

Your's in the LORD JESUS,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

Dorchester, *July 7*, 1663.

LETTER XIX.

The Character and Privileges of true Believers.

*To the most beloved People, the Servants of God in
Taunton, Grace and Peace.*

MOST DEARLY BELOVED,

I REJOICE to hear of God's continual goodness towards you; he is your Shepherd, and therefore it is that you do not want. Me you have not always, but he is ever with you, his rod and his staff shall comfort you. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your lives, and you shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

In this, my dear brethren, rejoice, that God is engaged in so near and so sweet relation to you. Doubtless your souls shall lodge in goodness, and be provided for carefully, that have the Almighty for your Shepherd. Blessed are the flock of his hands, and the sheep of his pasture, happy is the people that is in such a case.

But who are CHRIST's sheep?

Not all professors. I beseech you take heed how you rest in profession. It is not *profession*, but *conversion* that turns a man from a swine to a sheep. Let none of you flatter yourselves, that because you have escaped the gross pollutions of the world, therefore you are among the number of CHRIST's sheep. All this you may attain to, and yet be but washed swine; there must be an inward, deep, thorough, universal change upon your natures, dispositions, inclinations, or else you are not CHRIST's sheep.

If you will be put out of doubt whether you are his sheep or not, you must try it by the mark, that CHRIST sets upon all his sheep, even your *sanctification*. You that will stand to the trial, answer me truly and deliberately to these questions. Do you hate every sin as the sheep doth the mire? Do you regard no iniquity in your hearts? Do you strive against, and oppose all sin, though it may seem

never so necessary, never so natural to you ; or have you not your secret haunts of evil ? For every swine will have his swill. Do you abstain from sin out of fear, or out of dislike ? Are you at peace with no sin ? Do you not hide some iniquity as a sweet morsel under your tongue ? Is there not some practice that you are not willing to know is a sin, for fear you should be forced to leave it ? Do you love the commandment that forbids your sin, or do you not wish it out of the Bible, as that evil man wished God had never made the seventh Commandment ? Again, how do you stand affected towards holiness ? Do you love it ? Do you choose it ? Do you hunger and thirst after it, and desire it more than any temporal good ? Have you chosen the way of God's precepts, and had rather live holily than be allowed to live in your sins ? Do you in your very hearts prefer a strict life in communion with, and conformity to God, before the greatest prosperity of the world ? Do you choose holiness, not out of bare necessity, because you cannot go to heaven without it, but out of *love* to it, and from a deep sense that you have of the surpassing loveliness, and beauty of it ? If it be thus with you, you are the persons that the LORD JESUS hath marked for his sheep.

And now, come all that have this mark, come and understand your happiness ; you are marked out for preservation ; and let it go how it will with the rest, it shall go well with you. You are the separated ones upon whom the angel hath set the seal of the living God ; you are redeemed unto God from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, and have your Father's name written in your fore-heads.

“Hail, you are highly favoured of the LORD, blessed are you among men ;” though you are but poor and despised, and like little BENJAMIN among the thousands of Judah ; you carry away the blessing and the privilege from all the rest. God hath done more for the least of you than for the whole world of mankind besides. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” All that the Scripture speaks of that kingdom

of glory, that everlasting kingdom, it speaks to you. Behold your inheritance. You are the sons of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, joint heirs with CHRIST the LORD of glory.

Do you believe this? Do you thoroughly believe? If so, my work is done, I need not bid you rejoice, nor bid you be thankful, only believe. Do this and do all. Believe, and you will rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Believe, and you will be fruitful, and show your faith by your works. Believe, and you will love, for faith worketh by love. In a word, keep these things upon your hearts by daily and lively consideration, and this will bring heaven into your souls, and engage you to all manner of holy conversation. This will mortify you to the world, the grand enemy which I charge you to beware of. O remember yours is the kingdom; and ponder these sayings in your hearts. Beloved, I have written these things to you that your joy may be full. And now, peace I leave with you. I am CHRIST's ambassador to you, an ambassador of peace; his peace I pronounce unto you; in his name I bless you. Farewell in the LORD. I am

The fervent well-willer of your souls.

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

Devizes, *June 29, 1666.*



LETTER XX.

Of the Love of CHRIST.

To the Servants of GOD in Taunton, Salvation.

MOST DEARLY BELOVED,

OH, that my letters in my absence might be useful to you! It is my joy to serve you, and my love to you is without dissimulation: Witness my twice lost liberties.

and my impaired health, all which I might have preserved, had it not been for my readiness to minister to you.

But what do I speak of my love? It is the infinite love of God your Father that I would have to dwell upon you. Forget me, so you remember him. Let me be very little, so he be very lovely in your eyes. Bury me, so you set the LORD always before you. Let my name be written in the dust, so his name be written deep upon all your souls.

O LORD, I am thy servant, truly I am thy servant, glorify thine own name by me, and thou shalt have my hand to it, that I will be content to be hid in obscurity and to disappear through the brightness of thy glory.

I preach not myself, but the LORD JESUS. Give him your hearts, and I have my errand. I am but the friend of the Bridegroom, and my business is, but to give you to understand his love, and to gain your hearts unto him. He is an object worthy of my commendations, and of your affections. His love is worth the writing of, and worth the thinking of, and worth the speaking of. O my brethren, never forget, I beseech you, how he loveth you. He is in heaven, and you are on earth, yet he loveth you. Even now while he is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, how feelingly doth he cry out at the hurt of his poor members on earth, "SAUL, SAUL, why persecutest thou me?" O of what quick sense is our LORD unto us! when we are touched on earth he feels it in heaven.

Brethren, possess your hearts with this, that CHRIST's love doth go out with infinite dearth towards you. Even now while he is in all his glory, he earnestly remembers you still. This is the High Priest that, now entered into the holy of holies, doth bear your names, remembering every poor believer. He bears your names, but where? Upon his breastplate, upon his heart. (*Exod.* xxviii. 29.) Sure your lot is fallen in an happy place; what, in the bosom of CHRIST? Yea, verily I may apply that of GABRIEL, "O DANIEL, thou art greatly beloved," unto you; you are

beloved indeed, to have your names written upon the very heart of CHRIST now he is in glory.

O let his name be written on your hearts. Do not write his name in the sand, when he hath written yours upon his own breast ! Do not forget him who hath taken such care, that while he is, he may never forget you, having recorded your names not only on his book, but on his flesh, and set you as a seal upon his heart. He hath you upon his heart, but why ? For a memorial before the LORD continually. Beloved, your LORD is so far from forgetting you in all his greatness and glory, that he is gone into heaven on purpose, there to present you before the LORD, that you may be always in remembrance before him. O beloved, glory, yea, and triumph in his love ; doubtless it must go well with us. Who shall condemn ? It is CHRIST that died and rose again, and is now making intercession. His interest is potent. He is always present. Our Advocate is never out of court. Never did cause miscarry in his hand. Trust you safely in him.

O, the riches of CHRIST's love ! He did not think it enough to die for you. His love doth not end with his natural life on earth, but he ever liveth to make intercession for us. His love is like his life, ever, ever ; knowing no remission in degree, nor intermission of time, no cessation of working, but is ever, ever in motion towards us.

If the pens of all the world were employed to write volumes of love, if the tongues of all the living were exercised in nothing else but talking of this love ; if all hearts were made up of love ; and all the powers and affections of the mind turned into love, yet this were no less than infinitely too little, either to conceive or express the greatness of CHRIST's love.

O my beloved, may your souls be swallowed up in this love ! Think and think while you will, you can never think how much you are beloved. See that ye love again by way of gratitude, though not of requital : What, though your souls be but narrow, and your powers but little ? Yet

love him with all you have. Love him with all your hearts, and all your strength. To the meditations, and to the embraces of Divine love I leave you, remaining,

Your's in the bonds of your most dear LORD JESUS,
JOSEPH ALLENIE.

August 11, 1665.

LETTER XXI.

*To the beloved People the Inhabitants of Taunton, Grace
and Peace.*

MOST DEAR FRIENDS,

MY chief joy is, that my Beloved is mine and I am his; but next to that I have no joy so great as that you are mine and I am yours, and you are CHRIST's. My relation to CHRIST is above all; he is my life and my peace, my riches, and my righteousness: He is my hope and my strength, and mine inheritance, and my rejoicing: In him will I please myself for ever, and in him will I glory. I esteem myself most happy and rich, and safe in him, though of myself I am nothing. In him I may boast without pride, and glory without vanity. Here is no danger of being overmuch pleased; neither can the Christian exceed his bounds in valuing his own riches and happiness in CHRIST. The LORD hath dealt bountifully with me, and none shall stop this my confidence of boasting in CHRIST. But as my lot in him is above all, so it is no small content to me that my lot is fallen with you. And though I have broken my health, and lost my liberty once and again, for your sakes, yet none of these things move me. I wish nothing more than to spend and to be spent upon the service of your faith. I bless the LORD, for it is an invaluable mercy, that ever he called me to be an ambassador of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to you-wards. In this

station I desire to approve myself to him, and that I am withdrawn from my work for a season, it is but that I may return to you refreshed, and enabled for my work among you. I am tender of preserving the little strength God doth add to me, entirely for your sakes : I bless the LORD I am in great tranquillity here in this town, and walk up and down without any questioning me. I do by this return you my hearty thanks for your earnest prayers in my behalf, for it is God that must do the cure : I seem to be retired to this place, as a vessel rent and shattered and torn in the service, that is come to recruit in the harbour : And here I am as it were repairing and victualling to put forth again in the service : Which I shall do as soon as I am ready. What is my life unless I am serviceable ? And though I must for the present forbear my wonted labour, yet I shall not cease to exhort you while I am absent from you, to stand fast, and to grow up in your holy faith.

Be warned, my beloved, that you fall not upon those rocks on which so many have been split.

There are three things which I beseech you carefully to beware of.

First. Best while CHRIST is in your mouths, the world run away with your hearts : There is many a seeming Christian that will be found a mere idolater. Many a soul goes down to hell in this sin, and never discerns it till it be too late. Remember, that the oxen, the farm, wife, merchandize, all of them lawful comforts, did as effectually keep men from closing with CHRIST, as the vilest lusts of the worst of men. Whatever you find your hearts very much pleased in, among these earthly comforts, set a mark upon that thing, and remember that there lies your greatest danger. What you love most, you must fear most ; and think often with yourselves, This, if any thing, is like to be my ruin. O, the multitudes that perish by the secret hand of this enemy, the over-valuing of earthly things ! The hearers compared to the thorny ground did not openly fall away ; but while others withered, they were as green and fresh as ever ; and yet their inordinate affection to the

things of this life, secretly undid all at last. Little do most think while they please themselves in their estates, while they delight themselves so freely in their children, in their wives, in their habitations and possessions ; that these are the things which are like to undo them for ever. How little is that Scripture thought of, “ Love not the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Are there not many among us, who though they keep up prayer, and other holy duties ; yet the strength of their hearts goeth out after earthly things ? And these are their chief care and their chief joy. Such must know they are none of CHRIST’s ; and they had better understand it now, and seek to be renewed by repentance, than hereafter, when there shall be no place for repentance.

Secondly. Lest while iniquity abounds, your love to CHRIST wax cold. Remember what an abomination Laodicea was to CHRIST, because she grew lukewarm ; and what a controversy he had with Ephesus, a sound church, because she did but slacken and grow more remiss in her love. A friend is born for adversity ; and now is the time, if you will prove the sincerity of your love to CHRIST, by following him zealously, resolvedly, fully, now he is rejected and opposed.

Thirdly. Lest you keep up a barren and fruitless profession. See to it that you be not only professors, but proficient : Many think all is well because they keep on in the exercises of religion ; but alas ! you may keep on praying and hearing all the week long, and yet be not one jot the further. Many there are that keep going, but it is like the horse in the mill, that is going all day, but yet is no further than when he first began. Nay, it often happens in the trade of religion, as in trading in the world, where many keep on in trading still, till for want of care and caution, and examining their accounts, they trade themselves out of all. O, look to it, my brethren, that none of you rest in the doing of duties, but examine what comes of them. Otherwise as you may trade yourselves into poverty, so you may hear and pray yourselves into hardness of heart and

desperate security and formality. This was the very case of wretched Laodicea, who kept up the trade of religious duties, and verily thought that all was well, because the trade went on, and that she was increased in spiritual goods; but when her accounts were cast up, all comes to nothing, and ends in wretchedness, poverty, and nakedness. I commend you to the living God, remaining

Your fervent well-wisher and ambassador in CHRIST,
JOSEPH ALLEINE.

Devizes, *June 22*, 1766.



LETTER XXII.

An Admiration of the Love of God.

*To the most loving, and best beloved, the Servants of God
in Taunton, Salvation.*

MY MOST DEAR FRIENDS,

I LOVE you, and long for you in the LORD, and I am weary with forbearing that good and blessed work that the LORD hath committed to me, for the furtherance of your salvation. How long, LORD, how long shall I dwell in silence? How long shall my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth? When will God open my lips that I may stand up and praise Him? But it is my Father's good pleasure yet to keep me in a total disability of publishing his name among you; unto Him my soul shall patiently subscribe. I cannot complain that He is hard to me: I am full of the mercies of the LORD; and shall I complain? Far be it from me.

But though I may not murmur, methinks I may mourn a little, and sit down and wish, O if I may not have a tongue to speak, would I had but hands to write, that I might from my pen drop some heavenly counsels to my beloved

people. But it cannot be: Alas, my right hand seems to have forgot her cunning, and hath much ado with trembling to lift the bread unto my mouth. Do you think you should have had so little to show under my hand, to bear witness of my care for you, and love to you, if God had not shaken my pen as it were out of my hand? But all that he doth is done well and wisely, and therefore I submit. I have purposed to borrow hands wherewith to write to my beloved, rather than be silent any longer.

But where shall I begin, or when should I end? If I think to speak of the mercies of God towards me, or mine enlarged affections towards you, I feel already how insufficient all I can say will prove at last to utter what I have to tell you; but shall I say nothing because I cannot utter all? This must not be neither.

Come then, all ye that fear the LORD, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul. O help me to love that precious name of his, which is above all my praises! O love the LORD, all ye his saints, magnify him with me, and let us exalt his name together! He hath remembered my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Blessed be you of the LORD, for all your remembrances of me before the LORD. You have wrestled with the LORD for me, you have wrestled me out of the jaws of death. O the strength of prayer! Surely it is stronger than death. See that you honour the power and prevalency of prayer. O be in love with prayer, and have high and venerable thoughts of it. What distresses, diseases, death can stand before it? Surely I live by prayer. Prayer hath given a resurrection to this body of mine, when physicians and friends had given up their hopes.

O infinite love never to be comprehended, but ever to be admired, magnified, and adored by every creature! O let my heart be filled, let my mouth be filled, let my papers be filled, with the thankful commemoration of this matchless love! O turn your eyes from other objects! O bury me in forgetfulness, and let my love be no more mentioned, nor had in remembrance among you, so you be thoroughly

possessed and inflamed with the love of God. See that you study this. Fill your souls with wonder, and be ravished with this love. Take your daily walk, and lose yourselves in the field of love. O that your souls may be drowned in the love of CHRIST, till you say with the Spouse, "I am sick of love." Who in all the earth should admire and commend this love if I should not? I feel it, I taste it, the sweet savour thereof reviveth my soul; it is light to mine eyes, and life to mine heart. The warm beams of this blessed sun, O how have they comforted me, ravished, and refreshed me both in body and soul. Now my own hands can feed me, and my own feet can bear me, my appetite is quick, my sleep comfortable, and God is pleased to give some increase continually, though by insensible degrees: And shall not I praise that love which hath done all this for me? My heart is enlarged, but I told you paper could not hold what I have to speak of the goodness of the All-Gracious God, in which I live. The grace of our LORD JESUS be with you all. Fare you well in the LORD. I remain,

Your ũnworthy Minister and fervent well-wisher in the LORD,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

LETTER XXIII.

To the Servants of CHRIST in Huntingdon, Grace and Peace.

MOST DEAR CHRISTIANS,

I thankfully acknowledge, both to God and you, that I am many ways obliged to love and serve you; and surely, when the LORD shall turn our captivity, I will (through his grace) endeavour to show myself thankful. I am the more sensible of your great love, because I cannot be insensible how little I have been able to do to oblige you.

Able I say, for I am sure I have been willing to be much more serviceable. But now letters and prayers are all that I have for you: Of these I shall be ready to be prodigal. I fervently pray, and do not doubt to speed, that you may reap in grace and glory, what you have sown in bounty. "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous." Ah, how sure is it! And how great, and how near!

Come on, my dear brethren and fellow-travellers. Stir up yourselves, and set to your race. See that you loiter not, but speed in your holy course. What! tire by the way, or think of looking back, when heaven is the prize? God forbid! To him that soweth righteousness there shall be sure reward. What, though it should seem slow? As long as it is so sure and so great, never be discouraged. In the end you shall reap, if you faint not. Wait but a while, and you shall have a blessed harvest. The LORD speaks to the Christian, as he to his creditor in another case, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." O for faith and patience! How safely will these carry us to our harbour, through all difficulties.

Brethren, be ye followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. It is want of patience that undoes the world. Patience, I mean, not so much in the bearing the afflicted evil, as in waiting for the deferred good. If the reward of religion were in hand, who would not be religious? But the LORD deals all upon trust, and on that account is but little dealt with. You must plough and sow, and wait for the return of all at the harvest, when this life is ended. They that like not religion upon these terms, may see where they can mend their markets; but you, my brethren, "be steadfast, unmoveable, abounding in the work of the LORD, for as much as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the LORD." Wait a little, there is but a short life between you and the blessed inheritance of glory. Ah wretched unbelievers! How worthy are you to be shut for ever out of the kingdom, that did so undervalue all the glory that God had promised, as not to count it sufficient to pay you for a little waiting! Be-

loved, lift up your eyes, and behold your inheritance, the good land that is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain. The promises are a map of heaven. Do but view it believingly and considerately, as it is drawn there, and tell me, what think you of that worthy portion, that goodly heritage? Will not all this make you amends for your stay? Why, then, act like believers. Never think much of the pains nor expenses of religion. Let no man think he shall come off a loser. What, though you are much upon the spending hand? God is before-hand with you however. But I would have you principally to look forward. It is much that God hath laid out upon you; but who can tell what he hath laid up for them that fear him? And will you miss of all for want of patience? God forbid!

Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience, till he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient. Stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. What, shall the husbandman have more patience for the fruits of the earth, than you for the precious fruits of your faith? The husbandman hath no such certainty as you. He hath but a probability of an harvest, and yet he hath patience; he is content to venture. He is at great pains, and much cost; he is still laying out, and hath nothing coming in, and yet he is content to wait for his re-imbursement till the corn be grown. But your harvest is more sure, as sure as the infallible promise, the immutable oath of God.

Again, the husbandman hath no such increase to look for as you. If he were sure that every corn would bear a crown, with what joy, rather than patience, would he go through all his cost and labour? Why, brethren, such is a believer's increase. Every grain shall produce a crown, and every tear shall bring forth a pearl, and every minute in pains or prayers, an age of joy and glory. Beside, the husbandman hath long patience, and will you not have a little patience? It is not long patience that God doth expect of you. For behold the coming of the Lord

draweth nigh. Will the garrison yield when relief is at hand? Or the merchant give up his hopes when within sight of the harbour? Or will the husbandman give up all for lost, when he sees the fields white for harvest? Or shall he do more for a crop of corn, than you will do for a crop of glory? Far be it. Behold the Judge is at the door. The LORD is at hand. He cometh quickly, and his reward is with him. He comes with the crown in his hand to set upon the head of Patience. Therefore cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. The prisoners of the LORD, your brethren in the patience of JESUS, can tell you it is good suffering for such a Master.

We must tell you, as they said to our LORD in another case, "He is worthy for whom you should do this." God is beyond measure gracious to us here. He shines bright into our prison. He waters us from heaven and earth. As we trust you forget not the poor prisoners when you pray, so we would that many thanksgivings should abound in our behalf. And prayer being the only key that can open our prisons, we trust you will pray and not faint. Farewell, dear brethren, fare ye well in the LORD. I am

An unworthy Ambassador of JESUS in bonds

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

From the Prison at Juelchester,

October 28th, 1663.



LETTER XXIV.

To his Wife.

MY MOST DEAR THEODOSIA,

THOU seemest to have been long from me. Let nothing any longer detain thee, but my sister's necessity or father's authority. I am in a comfortable state of health, through Divine goodness, to which be glory for ever. See

that thou love and admire that Fountain of our life and peace, and be ever mindful that it is all thy business to love, and serve, and praise thy Creator and Redeemer. I have no other business but this to write to thee about : But this is all our business. What we use to call business is but vanity and pastime in comparison of this. Remember that it is thy one end only to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever. Learn well that lesson, and know that it is the only thing necessary. Every morning remember that thy serving and pleasing God is the whole business of that day, and therefore set out accordingly with an express design and intention to please God in thy eating, drinking, visiting, conversing and duties throughout the day. My most dear heart, I have nothing in the world that doth concern thee or me so much to write of to thee as this. O that thou mayest still be laying up in heaven ! Still furthering thy account ; still adding to the heap, and increasing thy glorious reward ! Nothing is done for God but thou shalt hear of it again. Whatever is not done for God, is but so much lost. Those things which others do, being led by their natural affections and desires, those things do thou do with holy aims, for spiritual ends, and then God will put it on the account, as so much done for him. So it is, my dearest, God keeps a true account. See that thou believe it, and so plough in hope, and sow in hope. Pray and hear with an eye to the sure reward. Let thy hopes be strong and lively, and then thy hands will be strong, and thy resolutions and affections will be strong. My time is very precious, and I would not lose an inch of it. See thou to it, that my time in writing this letter be not lost time. Love God the more, and set thine heart the straighter towards him, and do practise this one thing, in every action to look to thy ends, and then I have got well and thou better by these counsels. My dearest, I love thee in truth and tenderness, but my love signifies little, unless it serve thine eternal good. I rest

Thine own,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

LETTER XXV.

To his Wife.

MY DEAR HEART,

MY HEART is now a little at rest to write to thee. I have been these three days much disturbed. Strong solicitations I have had from several hands to accept very honourable preferment ; but I have not found the invitations to suit with the inclinations of my own heart, as I was confident they would not with thine. I have sent away my friends satisfied with the reasons of my refusal, and now can say, "Soul, return unto thy rest." But alas, that such things should disturb me ! I would live above this lower region, that no passages whatsoever might put me out of frame, or unsettle me from my desired rest. I would have my heart fixed upon God, so as no occurrences might disturb my tranquillity, but I might be still in the same quiet and even frame. Well, though I am apt to be unsettled, yet I am like a bird out of the nest, I am never at quiet till I am in my old way of communion with God, like the needle in the compass, that is restless till it be turned towards the pole.

I can say, through grace, With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me have I sought thee early. My heart is early and late with God, and it is the business and delight of my life to seek him. But alas, how long shall I spend my days in wishing, when my glorified brethren spend their's in enjoying ? As the poor imprisoned captive sighs under his irons, and can only look through the grate, and long for that liberty which others enjoy. Such is my condition. I can only look through the grate of this prison, my flesh. I see ABRAHAM, and ISAAC, and JACOB, sitting down in the kingdom of God ; but, alas ! I myself must stand without, longing, praying, waiting, for what they are enjoying. Happy souls ! When shall these fetters of mine be knocked off ?

When shall I be set at liberty from this prison of my body? You are clothed with glory, when I am clothed with dust. I dwell in flesh, in a house of clay, when you dwell with God in a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

I must be continually clogged with this cumbersome body, when you have put on incorruption and immortality. What continual molestation am I subject to by reason of this flesh? What pains doth it cost me to keep this earthen vessel from breaking? It must be exercised; and, which is worst of all, cherished with time-devouring sleep, so that I live but little of the short time I have allotted me here. But, O blessed souls! you are swallowed up of immortality and life. Your race is run, and you have received your crown. How cautious must I be to keep me from dangers! How apt am I to be troubled with the cares and fears of life, when your souls are taken up with God and CHRIST, and it is your work to be still contemplating and admiring that love that redeemed you from all this! What pains must I be at to repair the ruinous building of this earthly tabernacle, which, when I have done, I am sure will shortly fall about my ears; when you are got far above mortality, and are made equal with the angels. O I groan earnestly to be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven, being willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the LORD. O when shall I come and appear before him? When shall I receive the purchase of my SAVIOUR, the fruit of my prayers, the harvest of my labours, the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul? Alas, what do I here? This is not my resting place. My treasure is in heaven. O when shall I be where my heart is? Woe is me that I dwell in the tents of KEDAR! O that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest. Then would I hasten my escape from the storm and tempest, and would be out of the reach of fears, disturbances, and distractions. How long shall I live at such a distance from my God, at such a distance from my country? Alas! how can I sing the LORD's song in a strange land? No, I will hang my harp upon the willows, and sit

down and weep when I remember Sion. But yet my flesh shall rest in hope, and I will daily bathe my soul in the sweet thoughts of my blessed home. I will rejoice in hopes of what I do not yet enjoy, and content myself with the taste of what I shall shortly have my fill of.

The LORD grant the request I daily pour out before him, and make us furtherances to each other's soul, that we may quicken and promote and forward one another in his ways. Help me by thy prayers, as thou dost always. The God of all peace and comfort be with thee, my sweet love! Farewell.

Thine beyond expression,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.



LETTER XXVI.

God is a satisfying Portion.

MY MOST DEAR FRIEND,

HAD not my right hand long since forgot her cunning, and the Almighty shaken the pen out of my hand, I should long ere this have been writing to thee; but it is a wonder of Divine power and goodness that my soul had not before this time dwelt in silence, and that death had not put the long period to all my writing and converse.

Long is the song of love that I have to tell thee. I rejoice in the constancy of thy love, that the waters of so long a silence, and so great a distance have not yet quenched it; but thy desires are towards me, and thy heart is with me, though Providence hath hindered me from thy much-desired company. I will assure thee, it hath been a pleasure to my heart, a good part of this Summer, to hope that I should come one half of the way to give thee a meeting; but such is my weakness hitherto, that I am forced to put off those hopes till the Spring, when, if God give me strength to ride, I intend to see thee before mine own home.

I thank thee for all the dear expressions of thy fervent love : My expenses have been vast ; but surely goodness and mercy have followed me, and do follow me in every place, and in every change of my condition ; so that as to temporals I have lack of nothing, and as for spirituals I abound and superabound, and the streams of my comfort have been full and running over ; the joy of the LORD hath been my strength at weakest, and in the multitude of my thoughts within me, his comforts have refreshed my soul. I have found GOD a satisfying portion to me, and have sat down under his shadow with full delights, and his fruit is most sweet to my taste : He is my strength and my song, for I will talk of him, and write of him with perpetual pleasure. Through grace, I can say, methinks I am now in my element, since I have begun to make mention of him, I am rich in him, and happy in him, and my soul saith unto him with DAVID, “Thou hast made me most blessed for evermore ;” and happy is the hour that ever I was born to be made partaker of so blissful a treasure, so endless a felicity, so angelical prerogatives, as I have in him. O sweet are his converses, how delightful it is to triumph in his love !

Methinks the story of the lepers comes not unaptly to my mind, who said one to another when they had eaten and drunk, and carried away silver and gold and raiment, and went and hid it ; “We do not well ; this day is a day of good tidings and we hold our peace.” It is fit that I should be clothed with shame ; I acknowledge before GOD, who trieth the hearts, I am unworthy, everlastingly unworthy ; but it is not fit that he should lose his praise, nay rather let him be the more adored, and magnified, and admired for ever and ever. Bless the LORD, O my soul, bless the LORD, O my friend ; let us exalt his name together : He is my solace in my solitude, he is my standing comforter, my tried friend, my sure refuge, my safe retreat ; he is my paradise, he is my heaven ; and my heart is at rest in him : And I will sit and sing under his shadow, as a bird among the branches. And whither should I go but unto him ?

Shall I leave the fatness of the olive, and the sweetness of the fig-tree, and of the vine, and go and put my trust under the shadow of the bramble? No, I have made my everlasting choice: This is my rest for ever; He is my well Beloved in whom I am well pleased. Suffer me to boast a little here: I may glory without vanity, and I can praise him without end or measure; but I have nothing to say of myself: I find thou dost overvalue me: Set the crown upon the head of CHRIST; let nothing be great with thee but him; give him the glory: God that knoweth all things, knoweth my poverty, how little, how low, and how mean I am, and how short I come of the attainments of the saints, who yet themselves come so exceedingly short of the rule that God hath set before us; I often think of the complaint of the devout MONSIEUR DE RENTY: 'I feel myself very poor this week; and very defective in the love of God; if you would know wherein you pleasure me, love God more: That what is wanting in me, may be made up in the abundance of your love.' In this thou mayest most highly pleasure me; love God a little the better, praise him a little the more, for my sake; let me have this to please myself in, that God is a little the better loved for me, and that I have blown up, if it be but one spark of Divine love in the bosom of my dearest friend towards him.

Thy cautions are acceptable to me; I desire to provide for manifold changes and storms; I know I am not yet in the harbour; O pray with me that I enter not into temptation, for I am very weak in spirit, as well as in body, God knoweth. Some where or other I must break off, and thou wilt say, It is time to shut up; for once only know, that I am thy daily orator, and will be whilst I am: And yet once more I must have room to add my thankful acknowledgment of thine with our most dear affections to you both. I commend you to the God of love, still abiding

Thy fast and sure

FRIEND.

Bath, *October* 12, 1668.

LETTER XXVII.

DEAR COUSIN,

THE welcome tidings of your safe arrival at Barbadoes is come to my ears ; as also the news of your escape from a perilous sickness, for which I bless the LORD. I have considered, that GOD had bereft you of a careful father, and that your mother takes but little care for you ; so that you have none nearer than myself to watch for your soul, and to charge and admonish you in the LORD.

But yet, be not discouraged by these things, but look to heaven, fly unto JESUS, put away every known sin, set upon the conscientious performance of every known duty ; make CHRIST your choice, embrace him upon his own terms ; deliver up yourself, body and soul to him : See that you have no reserves nor limitations in your choice of him : Give him your very heart ; cast away your worldly hopes and expectations, make religion your business.

These things do, and you shall be sure of a Friend in heaven ; and if I may be any comfort to you, you shall not fail, while I live, to have one friend on earth to care for you. You are gone far from me, even to the uttermost parts of the earth : But I have sent these letters to call after you ; yea, not only to call, but to cry in your ears, O what is like to become of your soul ! Where is that immortal soul of yours like to be lodged for ever ? Amongst devils, or angels ? Upon a bed of flames, or in the joys of paradise ?

Go aside ; retire from the noise of the world, and say to yourself, ‘ O my soul ! Whither art thou going ? Do not I know that I must be converted or condemned ? That I must be sanctified, or I can never be saved ? O my soul ! What seekest thou ? What is my chief care ? Is it for this world, or the world to come ? Do I first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof ? Do I think heaven will drop into my mouth ? That glory and

immortality will be got with a wet finger, with cold prayers, and heartless wishes, while the world has my heart? Do I think to be crowned, and yet never fight? To get the race, and never run? To enter at the strait gate, and never strive? To overcome principalities and powers, and never wrestle? No, no; O my soul, either lay by the hopes of heaven for ever, or rouse up thyself, put forth thy strength after God and glory; either lay by thy worldly hopes, or thy hopes of immortality; away with thy sins, or let CHRIST go for ever; think not to have CHRIST and the world too, to serve God and Mammon: If thou follow the world as thy desire and delight; thou must die: The LORD hath spoken it, and all the world can never reverse it. Thus reason the case with your own soul, and give not rest to yourself night nor day, till you are gotten off from the world, broken off from every known sin, and gotten safe into CHRIST.

Dear cousin, I charge you by the LORD, to observe these things; pray over them, weep over them, read them again and again; do not pass them over as slight and ordinary things: Your soul is at stake, it is your salvation that is concerned in them; think not that I am in jest with you. I travel in birth with you, till CHRIST be formed in you. Why should you die? O repent and live, lay hold on eternal life, win CHRIST, and you win all. O be thankful to the LORD, that now you are fatherless and friendless, yet you have one Remembrancer to warn you to flee from the wrath to come. God forbid that I should find you at last in the place of torments, for your not embracing these counsels. To conclude, I charge you as a Minister, as a father, take heed of these three things:

1. Lest the gain of the world prove the loss of your soul:
2. Lest company draw you from God:
3. Lest a lofty or a worldly heart should thrust you out of the kingdom of heaven.

O labour, whatever you do, for an humble heart: Be little, be vile in your own eyes; seek not after great things:

be poor in spirit : Without this, heaven will be no place for you. Your lot is fallen in a place of great wickedness, where your soul is in much danger, where your temptations are many, and your helps for heaven but few ; where good examples are rare, and many will entice you to sin and vanity. O, look about you, consider your danger, fear lest you should miscarry for ever. I can but warn you, and pray for you : But though you have none to oversee you, remember the eye of God is upon you, to observe all your actions, and that he will surely bring all your practices into his judgment. I commend you to the Lord, and remain,

Your loving and careful uncle,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

August 19, 1668.



LETTER XXVIII.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter was exceeding welcome to me, not only as reviving the remembrance of our old friendship, but also, as bringing me news of some spiritual good that you received by me, which is the best tidings that I can receive : For what do I live for, but to be useful to souls in my generation ? I desire no other business than to please and honour my God. and serve my generation in that short allowance of time I have here. Shall I commend to you the lesson that I am about to learn ? It is, To be entirely devoted to the Lord, that I may be able to say after the Apostle, "To me to live is CHRIST." I would not be serving God only for a day in the week, or an hour or two in the day ; but every day, and all the day. I am ambitious to come up to that of our Lord and Master, To do always those things that please God. I plainly see that self-seeking is self-undoing ; and that then we promote ourselves best, when we please God most. I find

that when I have done all, if GOD be not pleased, I have done nothing; and if I can but approve myself to GOD, my work is done: I reckon I do not live that time I do not live to GOD.

I am fain to cut off so many hours from my days, and so many years from my life, as I have lived to myself. I find no enemy so dangerous as myself, and O that others might take warning by my hurt: O that I had lived wholly to GOD! Then had every day and every hour that I have spent, been found upon my account at that day: Then I had been rich indeed, in treasure laid up there, whither I am apace removing; then I had been every day and hour adding to the heap, and increasing the reward which GOD of his mere grace hath promised, even to the meanest work that is done to him. I perceive I am an eternal loser by acting no more for GOD; for what is done to myself is lost; but what is done for GOD, is done for ever, and shall receive an everlasting reward. Verily, if there be a world to come, and an eternal state after this short life, it is our only wisdom to be removing, and, as it were, transplanting and transporting what we can, from hence into that country to which we are shortly to be removed, that what we are now doing, we may reap the fruit of for ever.

Well, let us be wholly swallowed up in religion, and know no other interest but JESUS CHRIST. I cannot say, I have already attained; but this is that my heart is set to learn, That in all that I do, whether sacred or civil actions, still I may be doing but one work, and driving on one design, That GOD may be pleased by me, and glorified in me; that not only my praying, preaching, alms, may be found upon my account; but even my eating, drinking, sleeping, visits, discourses, because they are done to GOD. Too often do I miss my mark; but I will tell you what are the rules I set myself: Never to lie down but in the name of GOD; not barely for natural refreshment, but that a wearied servant of CHRIST may be recruited and fitted to serve him better the next day. Never to rise up but with this resolution, 'I will go forth this day in the name of GOD,

and will make religion my business, and spend the day for eternity. Never to enter upon my calling, but first thinking, I will do these things as unto God, because He requireth these things at my hands in the place and station he hath put me into. Never to sit down to the table, but resolving, I will not eat merely to please my appetite, but to strengthen myself for my Master's work. Never to make a visit, but to leave something of God where I go; and in every company to leave some good savour behind. This is that which I am pressing hard after: And if I strive not to walk by these rules, let this paper be a witness against me.

I perceive you are otherwise persuaded in some things, than I am: But however, I trust we meet in our end. May it be your whole study to gain souls, and to build them up in holiness, which is with too many the least of their cares. One duty (miserably neglected) I shall be bold to commend to you from my own experience, and that is, the visiting your whole flock from house to house, and inquiring into their spiritual estates particularly, and dealing plainly and truly with them about their conversion to God.

You see how free I am with you; but I know your candour. I rejoice in your happy yoke-fellow: Salute her from your old friend, and accept the unfeigned respects of him who is, Sir,

Your real and faithful friend,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

LETTER XXIX.

To a Minister in Prison.

WORTHY SIR,

It was but a little after my release from my own confinement, but I heard of yours; and now write to you, as one that hath taken a higher degree than ever, being

commenced prisoner of CHRIST. I was once affected with the picture of a devout man, to whom a voice came down from heaven, saying, *Quid vis fieri pro te?*, to which he answered, *Nihil, Domine, nisi pati ac contemni pro te.* Undoubtedly, Sir, it is our real glory to be throughout conformed to JESUS CHRIST, not only in his sanctity, but in his sufferings. I doubt not your consolations in CHRIST superabound in all your tribulations for him: Yet let me add this, That you have a whole shoal of promises come in to you, which you had not before; I mean, all the promises to suffering saints, which they have not so immediately, unless in a suffering state: And doubtless he hath gotten well, that hath gotten such a number of exceeding great and precious promises.

I can tell you little good of myself; but this I can tell you, That the promises of God were never so sweet to me, as since my imprisoned state. It shames me that I have let such a treasure lie by so long, and have made so little use of it. Never did my soul know the heaven of a believer's life, till I learned to live a life of praise, and to set home the unspeakable riches of the Divine promises, to which, through grace, I am made an heir. I verily perceive, that all our work were done, if we could but prevail with ourselves and others to live like believers; to tell all the world by our carriage, that there is such pleasantness in CHRIST's ways, such beauty in holiness, such reward to obedience, as we profess to believe!

It is but a little while that prisons shall hold us, or that we shall dwell in dirty flesh. PORPHYRY tells us of PLOTINUS, that he was ashamed to see himself in the body; to see a Divine and immortal soul in a prison of flesh; (for so they held the body to be;) but the worst shackles are those of sin. Well, they must shortly be put off. Our LORD doth not long intend us for this lower region. Surely He is gone to prepare a place for us: Yea, and he will come again, and receive us to himself, that where he is, we may be also. And what have we to do, but to believe, and wait, and love, and long, and look out for his coming, in

which is all our hope? It will be time enough for us to be preferred then. We know before-hand who shall then be uppermost. Our LORD hath showed us where our place shall be, even at his own right hand, and what he will say to us, "Come, ye blessed." Surely we shall stand in his judgment. He hath promised to stand our friend. Let us look for the joyful day: As sure as there is a God, this day will come, and then it shall go well with us. What, if bonds and banishment abide us for a season? This is nothing but what our LORD hath told us, "The world shall rejoice, but ye shall lament: Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." O how reviving are his words! "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

If that miserable wretch leaped cheerfully off the ladder, saying, 'I shall be a queen in hell,' with what joy should we do and suffer for God, knowing that we shall be crowned in heaven? They are wonderful preparations that are making for us. The LORD make us meet to be partakers. It was the highest commendation that ever that worthy, R. BAXTER, received, which fell from his scoffing adversary, TILLENUS, '*Totum Puritanismum totus spirat.*' O that this may be true of us and ours.

Let your true yoke-fellow, and my Christian friends with you, have my hearty commendation. And these counsels, I pray you, give them from me.

1. To habituate themselves, both as to their thoughts and discourses, more thoroughly than ever to holiness. Brethren, I would teach you the lesson that I resolve to learn, That your minds and tongues may as naturally run on the things of heaven, as others on the things of this world. Why should it not be thus? I am sure God and heaven as well deserve to be thought on and talked of as froth and vanity. There are many that have, in a great measure, learned this lesson, and why should not we? What, if it be hard at first? Every thing is so to a beginner. And is not ours a religion of self-denial? If we do but force ourselves awhile to holy thoughts and heavenly discourse, it will grow habitual

to us, and then it will be most natural, familiar and sweet. O what gainers will you be, if you learn this lesson !

It is the shame of religion, that Christians are so unlike themselves, unless upon their knees. Our lives and language should tell the world what we are, and whither we are going. Christians, let little things content you in the world, but aspire after great things in the grace of God. Many do little think what high degrees of holiness they might grow up to, even in this life, with pains and diligence. Sirs, be you men of great designs. Think it not enough if you have wherewith to bear your charges to heaven ; but aspire to be great in the court of heaven, favourites of the Most High, of tall growth, singular communion, that you may burn and shine in your place, that you may savour of heaven wherever you come, and that there may be an even-spun thread of holiness running through your whole course. It is our disgrace, that there is so little difference to be seen in the ordinary conversation of believers from other men. Is it not a shame, that when we are in company with others, this should be all the difference that is to be seen, that we will not curse and swear ?' If you will honour the Gospel, bring forth your religion out of your closets into your shops, trades, visits, and exemplify the rules of religion in the management of all your relations, and in your ordinary converse. Let there be no place or company that you come into, in which you do not drop something of God. This will be the glory of religion, and we shall never convince the world till we come to this. May you come, my brethren, out of your prisons with your faces shining, having your minds seasoned, and your tongues tipped with holiness. May your mouths be as a well of life, from whence may flow the holy streams of edifying discourse. May you ever remember, as you are sitting in your houses, going by the way, lying down, rising up, what the Lord doth then require of you.

2. To improve their present retirements from the world, for the settling of their spiritual estates. It is a common complaint amongst Christians, that they want assurance.

O if any of you that wanted assurance when you came to prison, may carry that blessing out, what happy gainers would you be? Now you are called more than ever to self-searching. Now bring your graces to the touchstone. Be much in self-observation. Rest not in probable hopes. Think not that it is enough that you can say, you hope it is well. Be restless till you can say, that you know it is well: That you know you are passed from death to life.

Think not that this is a privilege that only a few may expect. Observe but these three things:

1. To take heed of laying the marks of salvation either too high or too low.

2. To be much in observing the frame, and bent, and workings of your own hearts.

3. To be universally conscientious, and to be constant in even and close walking, and then I doubt not but you will have a settled assurance, and know and feel that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

I wish your prison may be a paradise of peace, and a Patmos of Divine discoveries. LORD JESUS, set to thy Amen. •I am, Sir,

Your unworthy Brother and Companion in the kingdom and patience of JESUS,

JOSEPH ALLEINE.

Jan. 10, 1664.



LETTER XXX.

*To the most beloved People, the Servants of God in
Taunton, Salvation.*

MOST DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR, MY JOY AND
CROWN,

MY HEART'S desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved. This is that which I have been praying and studying and preaching for these many years, and this is

the end of my suffering and writing at this present time. I seek not other gifts: Give me your hearts; let me but part between your sins and you; suffer me but to save you; give me leave to carry you over to JESUS CHRIST, and I will not ask you any more. I will serve you gladly, I will suffer for you thankfully, so I may but save you. Do not wonder why I follow you so pressingly, why I call upon you so frequently. Let not my importunity be grievous to you; all this is but to save you. CHRIST did not think his blood, and shall I think my breath, too dear in order to your salvation? What pity is it, that any of you should miscarry at last, under the power of ignorance, or by a profane negligence, or a formal and lifeless profession of strict godliness!

Beloved, I am afraid of you, lest (as to many of you) I have run in vain. I cannot but thankfully acknowledge, that there are not a few of you who are the joy of your Ministers, and the glory of CHRIST. But it cannot be dissembled, that far the greater number give little ground to hope, they are in the state of salvation. And must not this be a pinching thought to a compassionate Teacher, that he cannot persuade men, but that the most of them will wilfully throw away themselves? Is it not a woeful sight, to behold the Devils driving a great part of our miserable flocks, (as they did once the herd of swine,) violently down the hill, till they be choked in the water, drowned in the gulf of endless perdition? Ah miserable spectacle! What through the wilful blindness of some, the looseness and sensuality of others, the halving, and cold and customary religion of others, how great a number of our poor flocks is SATAN likely to carry utterly away from us, after all that hath been done to save them?

Yet I cannot but call after them. Harken unto me, O ye children. How long will ye love vanity, and trust in lying words? As the LORD liveth, you are lost, except you turn: Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye. Ah, how mercy wooeth you! How it waiteth to be gracious! Hear, O sinners, hear: See you not how the merciful

Saviour of the world stretcheth forth his hands all the day long, and spreadeth forth his wings, and calleth you as a hen doth her chickens ! Hear you not the soundings of his bowels ? He hath no need of you : Yet how do his compassions melt over perishing sinners ? His heart is turned within him, and shall not this turn your hearts ? His repentings are kindled together ; and shall not this lead you to repentance ? Behold, he standeth at the door and knocketh. O man, wilt thou keep JESUS at the door, and lodge BARABBAS in thy bosom ? O his melting love to sinners ! He calleth after them, he weepeth over them, he crieth to them. How long, ye simple ones, will you love simplicity ? Will you not be made clean ? When shall it once be ? Why will you die ? Turn you at my reproof : Behold, I will pour out my SPIRIT upon you. Sinner, art thou not yet melted ? O come in at his loving calls. Come out from thy sins : Touch the sceptre of grace and live : Why shouldest thou be dashed in pieces by his iron rod ? Kiss the SON. Why shouldest thou perish in the way ? Set up JESUS as thy King, lest he count thee for his enemy, because thou wouldest not that he should reign over thee, and so thou be called forth and slain before him. O how dreadful will this case be, to die by the hand of a Saviour ! O double hell, to have thy Redeemer become thine Executioner ! And the hand that was so long stretched forth to save thee, to be now stretched forth to slay thee ! and the merciful heart of CHRIST himself hardened against thee, so that he should call thee forth, and hew thee in pieces, as SAMUEL did AGAG before the LORD.

Beloved, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation, without sanctification : Or possessing you with happiness, without persuading you to holiness. God knows I have not the least hope ever to see one of your faces in heaven, except you be sanctified, and exercise yourselves unto godliness. This is that I drive at, I beseech you study to further *personal godliness* and *family godliness*.

1. *Personal godliness*. Let it be your first care to set

up CHRIST in your hearts. See that you make all your worldly interests stoop to him, that you be entirely and unreservedly devoted to him. If you deliberately, and ordinarily harbour any sin, you are undone. See that you unfeignedly take the laws of CHRIST, as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions; and subject your whole man faithfully to him. If you have a true respect to all God's commandments, you are sound at heart. O study to get the image and impress of CHRIST upon you within. Begin with your hearts, else you build without a foundation. Labour to get a saving change within, or else all external performances will be to no purpose. And then study to show forth the power of godliness in the life. Let piety be your business. It is the highest point of justice, to give God his due. Beware that none of you be a prayerless person; for that is a certain discovery of a Christless and a graceless person. Suffer not your Bibles to gather dust. See that you converse daily with the word. That man can never lay claim to blessedness, whose delight is not in the law of the LORD. Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise, else the Papists, yea, the Pagans, will condemn us. If ever you come to any growth in holiness, without the constant use of this practice, I am grossly deceived. And therefore I beseech, yea, even charge you by the LORD, that you would daily examine yourselves.

But piety without charity is but the half of Christianity, or rather impious hypocrisy. See therefore that you do justly, and love mercy, and let equity and charity run like an even thread, through all your dealings. Be you temperate in all things, and let chastity, and sobriety, be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, heavenliness and gravity be the constant ornaments of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity shine in all the parts of your conversation. See that you forget and forgive wrongs, and requite them with kindness. Be merciful in your censures, and put the most favourable construction upon our

brethren's carriage. Be slow in promising, punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness and innocency, affableness, yieldingness, and courtesy, commend your conversation to all men. Let none of your relations want that love and loyalty, that reverence and duty, that tenderness, care, and vigilancy, which their several places and capacities call for. This is true godliness. I charge you before the Most High God, that none of you be found a swearer, or a liar, a lover of evil company, or a scoffer, or malicious, or covetous, or a drunkard, or a glutton, unrighteous in his dealing, unclean in his living, or a quarreler, or a thief, or backbiter, or a railer: For I denounce unto you from the living God, that damnation is the end of all such.

2. *Family godliness.* He that hath set up CHRIST in his heart, will be sure to study to set him up in his house. Let every family with you be a Christian Church; every house, a house of prayer; every household, a household of faith. Let every householder say with JOSHUA, "I, with my house, will serve the LORD," and with DAVID, "I will walk within my house, with a perfect heart."

First. Let religion be in your families, not as a matter by the by, but the standing business of the house. Let them have your prayers as duly as their meals: Is there any of your families, but have time for their taking food? Wretched man! Canst thou find time to eat, and not time to pray?

Secondly. Settle it upon your hearts, that your souls are bound up in the souls of your family. They are committed to you, and (if they be lost through your neglect) will be required at your hands. Sirs, if you do not, you shall know that the charge of souls is a heavy charge, and that the blood of souls is a heavy guilt. O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and dost thou not yet bestir thyself for them, that their blood be not found in thy skirts? Wilt thou do no more for immortal souls, than thou wilt do for the beasts that perish? What dost thou do for thy children, and servants? Thou providest meat and drink for them, and dost thou not the same for thy

beasts? Thou givest them medicines, and cherishest them when they are sick, and dost thou not so much for thy swine? More particularly,

1. Let the solemn reading of the word, and singing of Psalms, be your family exercises. See CHRIST singing with his family, his Disciples, *Matt.* xxvi. 30. *Luke* ix. 18.

2. Let every person in your families be duly called to an account of their profiting by the word heard or read, as they are about doing your own business. This is a duty of consequence unspeakable, and would be a means to bring those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive.

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care, concerning their spiritual estates. Make inquiry into their conditions, insist much upon the sinfulness and misery of their natural state, and upon the necessity of regeneration in order to their salvation. Admonish them gravely of their sins, encourage beginnings. Follow them earnestly, and let them have no quiet for you, till you see in them a saving change. This is a duty of high consequence, but fearfully neglected by some. Doth not conscience say, “Thou art the man?”

4. Look to the strict sanctifying of the Sabbath by all of your Households. Many poor families have little time else. O improve but your Sabbath-days as diligently in doing your Maker’s work, as you do the other days in doing your own work, and I doubt not but you may come to some proficiency.

5. Let the Morning and Evening Sacrifice of solemn Prayer, be daily offered up in all your families. Beware they be not found among the families that call not upon God’s name; for why should there be wrath from the Lord upon your families? O miserable families without God in the world, that are without family prayer! What, have you so many family sins, family wants, family mercies; what, and yet no family prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication, if you do not with family prayer? Say not, I have no time. What hast thou all thy time on

purpose to serve God and save thy soul, and is this that for which thou canst find no time? Pinch out of your meals and sleep, rather than want for prayer. Say not, My business will not give leave. This is thy greatest business, to save thyself, and the souls committed to thee. In a word, the blessing of all is to be got by prayer. And what is thy business without God's blessing? Say not, I am not able. Use thy one talent, and God will increase it. Helps are to be had till thou art better able.

6. Put every one in your families upon private prayer. Observe whether they perform it. Get them the help of a form, if they need it, till they are able to go without. Direct them how to pray, by minding them of their sins, wants, and mercies, the materials of prayer.

7. Set up catechizing in your families, at least once every week. It was my parting, dying request, that you would set up and maintain this duty in your families. Have you all done it accordingly? Cannot your consciences witness, cannot your families witness you have not? Well, I thought my parting words would have done something with you: I hoped the fervent request of a dying Minister, would have prevailed for such a small matter with you. To this day without solemn catechizing in your houses! Ah, what a discouragement to your Teacher is this! Brethren, shall I yet prevail with you? Will you reject me also? O let me persuade you, before you take off your eyes from these lines, to resolve to set upon the constant exercise of this duty. Surely I have done and suffered more for you than this comes to: Will you deny me? I beseech you, let me find if ever God brings me again to visit your houses, that the words of a suffering Minister have some power with you. I have sent you help on purpose: What, shall all my persuasions be but speaking to the wind? Beloved, have you no dread of the Almighty's charge, That you should "teach these things diligently to your children, and talk of them as you sit in your houses, and train them up in the way they should go?" Hath God so commanded ABRAHAM, that he would teach "his children and his household,"

(*Gen.* xviii. 19,) and given such a promise to him there-upon, and will not you put in for a share either in the praise, or the promise? Say not, They are careless, and will not learn. What have you your authority for, if not to use it for God, and the good of their souls? You will call them up, and force them to do your work; and should you not at least be as zealous in putting them upon God's work? Say not, They are dull and not capable. If they be dull, God requires of you the more pains and patience; but so dull as they are, you will make them learn how to work; and can they not learn how to live? Are they capable of the mysteries of your trade, and are they not capable of the plain principles of religion? Well, as ever you would see the growth of religion, the cure of ignorance, the remedy of profaneness, the downfall of error, fulfil ye my joy in going through with this duty.

I have been long, and yet I am afraid my letter will be ended before my work is done: How loath am I to leave you, before I have prevailed with you to set to this work! Will you pass your promise, will you give me your hands? O that you would! You cannot do me a greater pleasure. Beloved, why should you not give the hand one to another, and mutually engage each to other, for more vigorous and diligent endeavours, in promoting family godliness? I must tell you, God looks for more than ordinary from you, in such a day as this. He expects that you should do both in your hearts and in your houses, somewhat more than ever, under these his extraordinary dispensations. My most dearly beloved, mine own bowels in the LORD, will you satisfy the longings of a travailling Minister? Will you answer the calls of Divine Providence? Would you that your children should bless you? O, then set up piety in your families! As ever you would be blessed or be a blessing, let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living God, in which his worship (according to the fore-mentioned directions) may be, with constancy, reverently performed.

O FATHER of spirits, that hast set me over thy flock to watch for their souls as one that must give an account : I have long studied thy will, and taught in thy name, and do unfeignedly bless thee, that any have believed my report. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them. I have manifested thy name unto them, and they have kept thy word. And now I am no more with them, but I come unto thee ! Holy FATHER, keep them through thine own name ; for they are thine. As they have kept the word of thy patience, so keep thou them in the hour of temptation. They are but a little and a helpless flock : But thou art their Shepherd, suffer them not to want. Do thou feed them, and fold them. Let thy rod and thy staff comfort them, and let not the beasts of prey fall upon them, to the spoiling of their souls. -

But what shall I do for them that will not be gathered ? I have called after them, but they would not answer ; I have charged them in thy name, but they would not hear ; I have studied to speak persuasively to them, but I cannot prevail. Then I said, I have laboured in vain ; I have spent my strength for nought, yet I cannot give them over, much less may I give thee over. LORD, persuade JAPHETH to dwell in the tents of SHEM. LORD, compel them to come in, and lay the hands of mercy upon them, as thou didst on lingering Lot, and bring them forth, that they may escape for their lives, and not be consumed. LORD, I pray thee open their eyes that they may see, and lay hold upon their hearts by thy omnipotent grace. Do thou turn them, and they shall be turned : O bring back the miserable captives, and suffer not the enemy of mankind to drive away the most of the flock before mine eyes, and to deride the fruitless endeavours of thy labourers, and boast over them, that he can do more with them, though he seek to ruin them, than all the beseechings, counsels, and charges of thy servants that seek to save them. LORD, if I could find out any thing that would pierce them, that would make its way into their hearts, thou knowest I would use it. But I have

been many years pleading thy cause in vain. O let not these endeavours also be lost ! O God, find out every ignorant, every profane sinner, every prayerless soul, and every prayerless family, and convince them of their miserable condition while without thee in the world. Set thy image upon their souls, set up thy worship in their families. Let not pride, ignorance, or sloth keep them in neglect of the means of knowledge. Let thine eyes be over the place of my desires for good, from one end of the year to the other end thereof. Let every house therein be a seminary of religion, and let those that cast their eyes upon these lines, find thee sliding in by the secret influence of thy grace into their hearts, and irresistibly engaging them to do thy pleasure. Amen, Amen.

JOSEPH ALLEINE.



A

Short Exposition

OF THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

EXTRACTED FROM BISHOP HOPKINS.

BY JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.



P R E F A C E.

1. ‘WHOSOEVER will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he keep the catholic faith :’ That faith which is enjoyed by all the children of GOD, at all times and in all places. But still, “if I have all faith, and have not charity,” that is, love, “I am nothing.” And if I have, or seem to have, all charity, yet “without holiness, I cannot see the LORD.” Without universal holiness, both of heart and life, I cannot see the face of GOD in glory. This is the purport of that solemn declaration, “In CHRIST JESUS,” in the Christian dispensation, “neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love.” Or, (as the Apostle varies the expression,) “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing ; but keeping the commandments of GOD.”

2. This manifestly refers to those ten words or commandments which GOD, in person, pronounced on Mount Sinai, and then wrote on two tables of stone, to be delivered down to his church in all ages. These are no other than a divine compendium of the whole duty of man. These, when the SON of GOD “was made flesh, he came not to destroy, but to fulfil.” And “not one jot or tittle of (these) shall pass away, till all things are fulfilled.”

3. These, abundance of Writers have attempted to explain ; but most of them in a dry and superficial manner. And even those who have penetrated deeper into their meaning, yet generally fail here ; either they speak of faith and love, the soul of all the commandments, slightly, and as it were, by the bye ; or they treat of them, as of any other particular commandments, standing in the same rank with the rest. Perhaps Bishop KENN alone, of all the late English writers, is clear of this charge ; who has so beauti-

fully resolved every commandment into love, and so strongly shown, that this is “ the fulfilling of the Law.” Yet even he is less explicit than might be desired on faith, the foundation of the Law ; the one foundation of the law written in the heart, without which we can neither love nor obey.

4. But this defect also is fully supplied by the labour of Bishop HOPKINS. He has not only shown, with the highest exactness, the true and the whole meaning of every commandment, the literal and the spiritual meaning, in its length and breadth, its depth and height, but has continually built on the true foundation, living faith in the Son of God, and continually pointed us to love, the life, the soul, the end of every commandment. He shows these in their true point of view, not as two distinct commandments, but as prevailing, influencing, enlivening, and perfecting the whole, without which all our religion is a dead carcase. His Exposition, therefore, I can safely recommend to all that believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST ; and indeed to all that long to believe on him, that know and bewail their want of faith. The former, it may direct and quicken in his Law ; The latter, it may, by the blessing of God, convince more deeply of the need they have to be washed in “ the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.”

JOHN WESLEY.

June 21, 1759.

EXPOSITION
OF THE
TEN COMMANDMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE manner wherein the law was delivered, is described to be very terrible and astonishing, in order to possess the people with greater reverence of it. For the greater majesty and solemnity of the action we read :

1. That the people were commanded to prepare themselves two days together, by a typical cleansing themselves from all external and bodily pollutions, before they were to stand in the presence of God ; which signifies unto us two things : (1.) That we ought to be seriously prepared when we come to wait before God in his ordinances, and to receive a law at his mouth ; indeed the dispensation of the Gospel is not such a ministry of terror, as that of the law was. God treats with us by his messengers and ambassadors ; whose errand, though it be delivered with less terror, yet ought not to be received with less reverence ; for it is God himself that speaks in and by them. (2.) If the Israelites were to sanctify and prepare themselves to appear before God at mount Sinai, how much more ought we to sanctify ourselves, that we may be meet to appear before him in heaven ?

2. The mount on which God appeared was to be fenced and railed in, with a strict prohibition, that none should presume to pass the bounds there set them, nor approach to touch the holy mount, under the penalty of death ; which intimates, (1.) The true distance we ought to keep

from God, and teaches us to observe all that reverence which belongs to him, as being infinitely our superior (2.) This setting bounds and limits to the mount signified, as in a type, the strictness and exactness of the law of God. His law is our boundary, which is not to be transgressed.

3. We have a description of the terrible manner in which God appeared to pronounce his law ; which served, (1.) To affect the people with a reverent esteem of those commands, which he should impose on them. (2.) To put them and us in mind, that if God was so terrible only in delivering the law, how much more terrible will he then be when he shall come to judge us for transgressing the law ! Indeed the whole apparatus of this day seems to be typical of the last ; but as it is the condition of all types, it shall be far out-done and exceeded by its antitype.

4. When God had, with his dread voice, spoken these ten words or commandments, the affrightment and astonishment of the people was so great, that they intreat MOSES to be the interpreter between God and them ; which intimates, (1.) That the law, as it is dispensed to us only from God, is in itself, the ministration of death and condemnation ; but as it is delivered to us by a Mediator, by our LORD CHRIST, (of whom MOSES here was a type,) so we may hear and observe it, and obtain eternal life, not for, but through our obedience to it. (2.) That the severity and terrors of the law were intended to drive us unto CHRIST, as here they drove the Israelites unto MOSES, the type of CHRIST ; from whose mouth the law spake not so dreadfully, as it did from God's.

5. Upon this request of the people, MOSES is called up into the mount ; the law was deposited into his hands, engraven on two tables of stone by the finger and impression of God himself, and kept in the ark ; which denotes to us, (1.) That our hearts are naturally so hard and stony, that it is only the finger of God that can make any impression of his laws upon them. (2.) The keeping of the tables of the

law in the ark, which was a type of CHRIST, prefigures to us that the law was to be kept and observed in him, who fulfilled all righteousness.

The law was twice written by GOD himself, once before, and again after the tables were broken by MOSES ; which signifies the twice writing of the law on the hearts of men : First, by the creating finger of GOD, and then again by his regenerating power, giving us a new impression.

7. When Moses came down from the mount, his face shone with such a lustre, that the people could not steadfastly look upon him ; therefore he put a veil over his face, which he laid aside, when he turned into the tabernacle to speak with GOD. The significancy of which history the Apostle gives us, (2 Cor. iii,) That there was a veil on the hearts of the Jews, so that they could not see to the end of the law, which is CHRIST ; who is the end of the ceremonial law, by putting an end to it in its abrogation, and the end of the moral law, because in him it has attained its end : For the end of it was, by convincing us of our weakness and inability to perform it, to lead us to CHRIST ; by whose merits alone, and not by the works of the law, we are to expect justification before GOD. Yet there was so thick a veil cast over the law, that the Jews could not look through it on the glory that shone in CHRIST, of whom MOSES was still the type ; but when they shall turn to the LORD, this veil shall be taken away, and then shall they discern the significancy of all those ritual observances, and perceive spiritual things after a more sublime and spiritual manner.

General Rules for the right understanding, and expounding of the Commandments.

1. All the precepts in the Holy Scriptures, which concern the regulating of our lives and actions, though not expressly mentioned in the decalogue, may very aptly be reduced under one of these ten commandments. There is no duty required, nor sin forbidden, but it falls under one at least of these ten words, and sometimes under more

than one ; therefore to the right interpretation of this law, we must take in whatsoever the Prophets, Apostles, or our LORD JESUS CHRIST himself has taught, as comments and expositions on it : For the decalogue is a compendium of all that they have taught, concerning moral worship and justice. Yea, our Saviour doth epitomise this very epitome, and reduces these ten words into two, Love to God and our neighbour.

2. The affirmative commands include the prohibition of the contrary sins ; and the negative include the injunction of the contrary duties. For example : The third commandment forbids the taking God's name in vain ; therefore the hallowing and sanctifying it is therein commanded. The fourth requires the sanctifying of the sabbath, therefore the profanation of it is thereby forbidden.

3. The same precept which forbids the outward acts of sin, forbids the inward desires and motions of sin in the heart ; and those which require the external acts of duty, require likewise those holy affections of the soul that are suitable thereto. As for instance ; the same command that requires me to worship God, exacts from me not only the outward service of the lip, or of the knee, but much more the inward reverence and affection of my soul : And those who worship God only with their bodies, when their hearts are estranged from Him, are guilty of idolatry even in serving and worshipping the true God ; for they set up their idols in their hearts, when they come to inquire of him, as the Prophet complains. (*Ezek. xiv. 7.*) So the fifth commandment not only requires the external acts of obedience to parents and those in authority over us, but an inward love and esteem for them in our hearts. So also, not only murder is forbidden by the sixth commandment, but all the incentives to, and degrees of it, as anger conceived inwardly in the heart, or expressed outwardly in words, &c.

4. The command not only forbids the sin expressly mentioned, but all occasions and inducements leading thereto : And as some one sin may be an occasion to all others, so

it may be well said to forbid in every precept, such as familiarity with evil persons, drunkenness, &c.

5. The commands of the first Table are not to be kept for the sake of the second, but the commands of the second are to be kept for the sake of the first: For the worship and service of God is not to be performed out of respect to men, but our duty towards men is to be observed out of respect to God. If we abstain from sins because they will expose us to shame and suffering among men, or worship God that men may respect us, we are but hypocrites. The duties we owe to men are not to be done only for man's sake, but for God's: From a sincere principle of obeying Him, conformity to his example, and a comfortable hope and expectation of his eternal reward. And those who perform their duties without respecting God in them, lose both their acceptance and reward. Therefore our Saviour condemns that love and beneficence, which proceed merely on human and prudential accounts. (*Matt.* v. 46, *Luke* vi. 33, 34.)

6. The moral Commands of the first Table supersede our obedience to the commands of the second, when they are not both consistent. Thus, we are required to obey our parents, and to maintain and preserve our lives; but if we are brought into such circumstances, as that we must necessarily disobey either God or them, either prostitute our souls to guilt or our lives to destruction; in such a case our Saviour has instructed us, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But the fourth Command being partly moral, and partly positive, our obedience to that may be superseded by the duties of the second table; works of necessity and mercy sometimes will not permit us to be employed in works of piety, nor to sanctify the Sabbath after such a manner as else we ought; for the Lord requires mercy rather than sacrifice, (*Hosea* vi.) and this our Saviour alleges, (*Matt.* iv. 13,) in which sense it holds true that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (*Mark* ii.) Whatsoever therefore is

a work of necessity, or of charity and mercy, and that not only towards man, but towards brute beasts also, may lawfully be done on the Sabbath-day, without bringing on us the guilt of profanation; for that which is purely moral in the second table, doth in a sort, derogate from what is but positive and instituted in the first.

7. Whatsoever is forbidden in any Command, all the signs and symptoms of it, and also all the effects and consequents of it, are forbidden in the same. Thus, under the prohibition of idolatry falls the prohibition of feasting in idol-temples, and eating meats sacrificed to them, as being too evident a sign of our communion with them. So in the same command, wherein pride is forbidden, (which is chiefly the first and second, for a proud man sets up himself for his god,) all the signs and effects of pride are forbidden; as a lofty look, a mincing gait, affected behaviour, vain apparel. (*Isa.* iii. 16.)

8. The connexion between the commands is so close and intimate, and they are so linked together, that he who breaks one is guilty of all. That which knits them thus together, is the authority and sovereignty of God, enjoining their observance: So that he who fails in due obedience to any one, does virtually and interpretatively transgress them all. (*James* ii. 10.) Since the authority of the great God is one and the same in all those laws, he that shall so far disrespect his authority, as wilfully to break one of them, evidently declares, that he owns it not in any; and though other considerations may restrain such an one from those crimes which are forbidden by some commandments, yet his observance of them is no part of obedience, nor can it be interpreted to be performed out of conscience and respect towards God. (*James* ii. 11.)

The Preface to the Commandments,

Carries an equal respect and reverence to them all, and contains a strong argument in it to enforce the obedience of them. God has accommodated himself to our temper, which is chiefly to be worked upon by fear or love, and

proclaims, 1. His authority to beget fear, "I am the LORD thy God." 2. His benefits and mercies to engage love, "that brought thee out of the land of Egypt," &c. Now, what motives can be urged more enforcing than these, which are drawn both from power and goodness; the one obliging us to subjection, the other to gratitude?

1. He is the LORD GOD, the great Creator, only Proprietor, and absolute Governor and Disposer of all things, and therefore, on this account, we owe an awful observance to all his laws and injunctions. It is but fit and just, that we should be subject to him who created us, and who has infinite power, for our contumacies and rebellions, eternally to destroy us.

2. As the authority of GOD is set forth to move us to obedience, by working on our fear, so his benefits and mercies are declared to win us to it, from a principle of love and gratitude. We have received our life, and innumerable blessings and deliverances, both spiritual and temporal, from him. God might have required from us the very same obedience which now he doth, without promising us any reward for it; for we owe him all that we can possibly do, as he is the Author of our being: But he has been so far pleased to condescend from his prerogative, as to command us nothing, but what has already brought us very great advantages; and will, for the future, bring us far greater, when his hands shall be as full of blessings, as his mouth is full of commands. He enjoins us a work that is in itself wages, and yet promises us wages for doing that work. Certainly then we must needs be the most disingenuous of all creatures, and the greatest enemies to our own happiness, if these considerations do not win us to yield him that obedience, which redounds not at all to his profit and advantage, but our own.

This deliverance from Egypt and the house of bondage, may be understood typically, as well as literally; and thus understood, GOD may be said in a spiritual sense, to have brought us also out of Egypt, &c., therefore the enforce-

ment of the commandments on this account and consideration belongs to Christians, as well as it did belong to the Church of the Jews. And if the consideration of a temporal deliverance was so powerful a motive to engage the Israelites to obedience, how much more effectually should we be obliged to it, whose deliverance is far greater than their's was ; for God has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. As our deliverance is spiritual, so ought our obedience to be.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

I. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

THE duties required in this commandment are, 1. That we must have a God ; against Atheism. 2. That we must have the LORD Jehovah for our God ; which prohibits Idolatry. 3. That we must worship the only true God alone for our God ; which forbids Polytheism, or the worshipping of many gods ; and Samaritanism, or the worshipping of false gods together with the true. 4. That all these services and acts of worship, which we tender unto the true and only God, be performed with sincerity and true devotion. This is implied in the expression “before me,” and forbids profanations and hypocrisy ; for, because the heart is bare and naked in the sight of God, and our spirits exposed to his view ; therefore to have no other god before him denotes, that our serving and worshipping of him ought to be sincere and affectionate. It is not enough to have no other god before me, not to fall down prostrate before any visible idol ; but the law is spiritual, and searches the very thoughts ; and if there be any idol set up in the heart, any secret lust or hidden sin, which is the soul's idol, and keeps it from being chaste and true to its God, any crooked ends and sinister respects in the worship of God ; this is to have another god in the sight of Jehovah, and before him ; who requires truth in the inward parts, and is

chiefly delighted in the unfeigned desires and breathings of the heart after him, because by these we own him to be an all-knowing God.

So that this first command respects worship, and in this are included among other duties, the knowledge and love and fear of God, trusting in and obedience to him. Invocation of and rendering praise to him. The love of God is the principle from which all our actions should flow ; and the glory of God, the end to which they should be directed. Now, to do a thing to the glory of God, is to do it in obedience to his commands, and in imitation of his adorable excellencies and perfections. There are several other duties included in the true worship of God ; but in these especially doth consist the having the LORD for our God.—Love (and the same may be said of the fear) of God, is the sum of all the commands of the first table, and hath in it these three acts or degrees, namely, 1. An earnest and panting desire after God. The holy soul thirsts after the water-brooks, the streams of his ordinances, wherein God pours out his grace and his SPIRIT, to refresh the longing desires of this holy impatience ; but not being satisfied with this, he still makes up to the fountain, and never rests contented, till he has ingulphed and plunged himself into God, and is swallowed up in beatitude !—2. Joy in the fruition of God, according to the measures of God's communicating himself to the soul.—3. A holy zeal for God. Zeal is the indignation of the soul, and the revenge that it takes on whatsoever is an impediment to the obtaining its desires. Now, the earnest desire of a true saint is the enjoyment of God, and the glory of God, and of both these, sin is the only let and hinderance ; therefore a soul that is passionate for God, has not so great indignation against any thing as sin, whether it be in himself, or in others. Can he endure to see his God daily provoked and injured, to hear his name blasphemed, to see his ordinances despised, his servants abused, &c , and not rise up to vindicate his honour ? He is jealous for the LORD of Hosts, he mourns and weeps in secret for the provocations daily

committed against the great Majesty of heaven ; and if he has power and authority to do it, he punishes and avenges them openly.

This first command is the ground and foundation of the other three commands of the first table ; for as this requires in the general, that the true God should be truly worshipped, so the three next prescribe the means and branches of his worship, and the way and manner how he should have it performed.

The sins forbidden, are, 1. Atheism, both speculative and practical, in respect either of the being or attributes of God. If there be a God, he must necessarily have all perfections, and every perfection in an infinite degree ; therefore to deny any one of God's perfections, whether in kind or degree, is the same thing, as to deny his very being : So that an Atheist is one who denies the being of a God, or a Providence, or any of the Divine perfections or attributes, and consequently has no religion, true or false. If he denies any of these expressly in words, or disbelieves them in his mind, he is a speculative Atheist ; if he denies them in his life and conversation, by living as if there was no God, or as if that God did not see, and take notice of his actions, or would not reward or punish him according as they are good or evil ; such a one is a practical Atheist. And this every natural man is, who goes on contentedly in his sins, however convinced he may be in his own mind of the being and perfections of God, and however strongly he may assert and maintain them in words. From hence it is plain, that under the head of Atheism may be ranked all presumption and despair, distrust and carnal security.

2. Ignorance of the true God : For this precept which requires us to have the LORD for our God, as well includes the having him in our understanding, by knowing him aright, as in our will and affections, by loving, fearing, and worshipping him. The right worship of God must necessarily presuppose the knowledge of the object, to whom we direct that worship ; otherwise we do but erect an altar to the unknown god, and all our adoration is but supersti-

tion ; yea, and we ourselves are but idolaters though we worship the true Deity : For all that service which is not directed to the supreme Essence, who is infinitely holy, just, merciful, and glorious, beyond what we can conceive, is not tendered to the true God, but to an idol of our own making. We worship we know not what, (*John* iv. 22,) whilst we have no distinct knowledge of God's nature, will and attributes. All ignorant persons are idolaters, who though they fall not down before stocks and stones, yet form such uncouth ideas and strange images of God in their minds, that no more represent his infinite perfections, than those dumb idols that the Heathen worship. Now it is a difficult matter to have right and genuine conceptions of the Divine Majesty, when we address ourselves to him to worship him ; and unless we do represent God to ourselves, when we worship him, it is hard, if not impossible, to keep up the intention of our spirit, and to hinder our mind from straying. Therefore the right way to attain to a true notion of the Divine nature is, by a serious consideration of God's attributes ; and when we come to worship him, let us not frame any idea of him in our imagination, but labour to possess our hearts with an awful esteem of his attributes, of his infinite justice, mercy, truth, power, &c. All other attributes, as we conjoin them either to mercy or justice, are most enforcing motives either of hope or fear. It is a mighty support to our hope, when we reflect on the mercy of God, accompanied with the attributes of eternity, immutability, truth, and omnipotence. And again, it will affect us with a profound fear and dread of this great and glorious God, to consider that the same attributes attend on his justice.

3. Profaneness. If this be taken in a more large and general sense, every ungodly sinner, who gives himself to work wickedness, and lives in a course of infamous and flagitious crimes, is called and reputed a profane person : And indeed he is profane in the highest degree, that not only neglects the more spiritual duties of religion, but the natural duties of moral honesty, temperance and sobriety.

But in a more proper and restrained sense, profaneness signifies only the neglect or despising of spiritual things; for in strict acceptation, he is a profane person who either slights the duties of God's service, or the privileges of his servants. Now the spiritual and sacred things are,

First. God himself, in his nature, and in his name, and attributes. 1. In his nature and essence, we profane God, when we entertain any blasphemous or unworthy thoughts of him, derogatory to his infinite perfections. 2. In his name; which we profane, when, in our trivial discourses, we rashly bolt out his great and terrible name, and much more by oaths and execrations. 3. In his attributes; which we profane when our affections or actions are opposite or unsuitable to them. We profane his holiness by our impurity; his omnipotence by our despondency; his omniscience by our hypocrisy; his mercy by our despair; his justice by our presumption; his wisdom by our sinful policy; his truth by our security notwithstanding his threatenings, and our slothfulness notwithstanding his promises. And in this sense, every sin is a kind of profaneness, as it manifests a contempt of the infinite excellencies of the Deity; for there is no man, whose heart is possessed with a reverential and due esteem of God, that can be induced by any temptation to sin against him and provoke him. Every sin is a slighting of God, either of his justice, or mercy, or holiness or power, or all of them: For what do we when we sin, but prefer some base pleasure or sordid advantage before the great God of heaven? Nay, we often sin against God for nothing, and defy his wrath and justice, without being provoked to it by any temptation. Thus the selling of CHRIST for thirty pieces of silver, argued not only treason but contempt. (*Zech. xi. 13.*)

Secondly. The time which God has set apart and consecrated for his own worship and service, is sacred and holy; and we profane it when we employ any part of it in the unnecessary affairs of this life, but much more in the service of sin. This is a sacrilegious robbing of God of what is dedicated entirely to him, and that either by his immediate

appointment, as the Sabbath, or by the appointment of those whom God has set over us, and entrusted not only to preserve our rights and properties, but also his worship inviolate, as special days of thanksgiving or humiliation.

Thirdly. The ordinances of CHRIST are holy and sacred; which we profane, when either we neglect them, or are remiss and careless in our attendance on them.

Now, therefore, (1.) He is a profane person that thinks and speaks but slightly of religion, which is the chief excellency of human nature. All the works of creation glorify God by showing forth his infinite attributes in their frame and production; but rational creatures alone can worship and praise him. He is profane that takes up his religion by chance, without examining the reasonableness and certainty of it; who does not believe religion to be a matter of that concernment as to require his exactest study and industry in searching into its grounds and principles, but thinks that any may suffice whatsoever it may be, or who secretly despises the holiness and strictness of others, and thinks they are too precise.

(2.) He is a profane person, who neglects the public worship and service of God, when he has opportunity and ability to frequent it, either out of a wretched sloth and contempt of the ordinances of CHRIST, being glad of any idle excuse, as the badness of the weather, and the like, for absenting himself; or out of a pretended dissatisfaction and scruple of conscience, though he allows himself in a state of sin and rebellion against God; for this is only humour and frowardness, because he has been of another way, therefore he will pertinaciously maintain it.

(3.) He is profane, who neglects the performance of religious duties in his family, and in secret; or who performs them slightly and superficially, without zeal and affection. All our Christian sacrifices of prayer and praise must be offered up with fire, as the Jewish sacrifices were: (*Lev. ix. 24; vi. 13.*) And that fire which alone can sanctify them, must be darted down from heaven. Also he is profane that performs holy duties for worldly ends and advantages.

A hypocrite is the most profane wretch that lives; the gross and profligate sinner does not half so much indignity to religion as he doth.

(4.) He is profane who makes what God has sanctified common and unhallowed, by taking his name in vain, profaning the sabbath and word of God, &c.; and he that despises spiritual privileges and enjoyments. If it were so profane in *ESAU*, (*Heb. xii.*) to slight the priesthood in himself, they also are profane who vilify it in others, and make those the objects of their scorn and contempt, whose office it is to stand and minister before God and CHRIST; and so are they, who despise the privileges and dignity of the children of God: And the disrespect shown to the messengers and children of God, argues a secret contempt of him who is their Master and their Father.

(5.) Idolatry, which includes Polytheism and Samaritanism. Idolatry is either external, (which is forbidden in the second command,) or internal, which is prohibited in this command, and is the giving to any thing in heaven or earth that inward heart-worship of affiance, love, fear, veneration, and dependence, which is due only to the true God: And they are guilty of idolatry,

First. Who acknowledge and worship another god different from Him, who has revealed himself to us in his Holy Scriptures. Now they who, though acknowledging one infinite and eternal Being, deny the persons of the SON and HOLY GHOST, worship an idol, and not the true God; for the only true God is FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

Secondly. Those that say that CHRIST is God, and worship him as God, yet deny that he is of the same nature and substance with the LORD JEHOVAH, must necessarily make more gods than one, and those of a diverse essence and being; and therefore are not only guilty of blasphemy, in robbing Christ of his eternal Sonship and the Divine nature, but of idolatry, in attributing Divine honour and worship to him, whom they believe to be but a creature, and not God by nature.

Thirdly. Those who ascribe or render to any creature

that which is proper and due only to GOD; as those who hold the body of CHRIST to be omnipresent, and all those who chiefly and supremely love any creature: As the covetous person, (*Col.* iii. 5,) the sensual epicure, (*Phil.* iii. 19,) the proud person, for he loves himself supremely, sets up himself for his own idol; and generally all such, who love and admire any thing above GOD, or esteem any thing so dear, that they would not willingly part with it for his sake; and all who put their trust and confidence in any creature more than in GOD, as when we depend on interest, or power, or policy, for our safeguard and success. And that we do so, appears when we are secure and confident of the enjoyment of such created comforts and supports, but diffident and dejected when we are deprived of them: For since GOD is always the same, we should likewise have the same spirit and courage, did we place our whole affiance in him. Lastly, he is a gross idolater, who sets up any creature in his heart, whether saint or angel, to pray to it.

II. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,
&c. &c.*

As spiritual and internal idolatry, residing in the affections and dispositions of the soul, is forbidden in the first command; so is external idolatry, which is the outward expression of the other, forbidden in this command; and, by consequence, we are (by the second general rule) required to worship GOD according to the rules he has prescribed us. And therefore, as the first command comprehends whatsoever appertains to the internal worship of GOD; so under this is comprehended whatever appertains to the external and visible worship of GOD. Now concerning the worship of GOD, note,

1. That the true and spiritual worship of GOD is an action of a pious soul, wrought and excited in us by the HOLY GHOST, whereby with godly love and fear we serve GOD acceptably according to his will revealed in his word; by faith embracing his promises, and in obedience perform-

ing his commands to his glory, the edification of others, and our own eternal salvation. And it comprehends both inward and outward worship.

2. External worship is a sacred action of a pious soul, wrought and excited by the HOLY GHOST, whereby with all reverence we serve God, both in words and deeds, according to his revealed will; in partaking of his sacraments, attending on his ordinances, and performing those holy duties he has required from us, to his glory, the edification of others, and our own salvation. This worship, though external, is nevertheless spiritual: For it proceeds from the SPIRIT of God, exciting our spirits to the performance of it, and is directed by a spiritual rule to a spiritual end.

3. The parts of this external worship are divers, whereof the most principal are the celebration of the sacraments, solemn prayer, and solemn praise and thanksgiving. But besides these, there are many other things which belong to the service of God, as many as there are duties of religion and piety; such are a free, open, and undaunted profession of the truth, a religious vowing to God things that are lawful and in our power, an invoking of the testimony of God to the truth of what we assert, or to the faithful discharge of what we promise, when we are duly called to do it by lawful authority, a diligent reading of the word of God, and a constant and reverent attendance on it when it is read and preached; fasting, and divers other duties: Some of which belong to the proper worship of God, as parts of it, others as means and helps to it.

4. Though God especially delights in the acts of internal worship, such are faith, hope, charity, reverence, patience, and a cheerful willingness to perform all the duties of obedience, without which all other acts of worship are dead and unsavoury; yet this internal worship alone suffices not, without the performance of those parts of external worship, which may, to the glory of God, and the good example of others, express the devout dispositions of our souls. For (1.) God has no less strictly enjoined his external worship, than he hath his internal. (2.) God severely threatens and

punishes such as give external worship unto any other, but himself. And we find in *2 Kings* xxix. that God makes a punctual computation of those who had not alienated their bodily worship to the service of an idol; and therefore we may conclude, that he respects and accepts those, who in faith and sincerity tender it to himself. (3.) God has created the whole man, both soul and body for himself, and sustains both in their being, and therefore expects homage and service from both: From the soul, as the chief seat of worship; from the body, as the best testimony of it. (4.) Not only our souls, but our bodies too, are redeemed by CHRIST; therefore both should be employed in his worship and service: Yea, our bodies are said to be temples of the HOLY GHOST; and where should God be worshipped, or that worship appear, but in his temple? (5.) The body is to partake of the blessings of obedience; therefore it is but reasonable, it should partake of the service of obedience.

5. All that outward reverence which we show in worship, must be estimated according to the customs of places; so that what they use as a sign and expression of honour to their superiors, (such as uncovering the head, bowing the body, and an humble submission and settled composure,) ought much more to be used in the presence of the great God: Not that they are essential parts of worship, but testimonies of it.

6. We ought not to use any other external worship, than what God Himself has appointed in his holy word. The Scripture has set our bounds for worship, to which we must not add, and from which we ought not to diminish. But if any thing be imposed on us, not as a part of worship, but as a circumstance and modification of worship, we ought to submit to it, if the things so imposed be in themselves lawful and honest; which they are, if not condemned by Scripture,—if they tend to order and decency in the church,—if imposed by command of a lawful power,—if they are such as neither for their levity nor number, distract the seriousness and devotion of our spiritual worship.

Sins Forbidden.—Contempt of the worship of God, of which already in the character of profane persons and superstition in performing it. Superstition is a needless and erroneous fear in matters of religion; and is either negative, which consists in making the not doing of that which is lawful and harmless a matter of conscience and religion; or positive, which is a restless fear of the mind, putting men upon acts of religion, which are not due, or not convenient; and expresses itself either by giving Divine honours to that which is not God, or worshipping the true God by an image, which is idolatry; or secondly, by performing needless and superfluous services to the true God, which is will-worship. And that is nothing else, but the inventing and ascribing any other worship to God, besides what he has commanded and instituted. To use traditionary charms and incantations, or any vain observances, to free us from pains and diseases, or other troubles that molest us, falls under this head of superstition.

The Sanction of this precept contains a gracious promise of mercy to the careful and conscientious observers of it, and a severe and fearful threatening against all who shall presume to violate it. In the threatening we have these things considerable:

1. Who is it that denounces it? : “I the LORD thy God,” &c. Which words contain in them a description of God. First, by his relation to us, Thy God. Secondly, by the mightiness of his power; for the words may be rendered, I the LORD thy God am strong and jealous; strong, and therefore able; jealous, and therefore will revenge dishonour done him by idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, and frequently set forth under that name in Scripture. The cause and original of jealousy is love, and the effect of it is revenge. Now this jealousy is ascribed to God, only by way of accommodation and similitude, speaking after the manner of men; so that there is not *idem affectus*, the same inward affection, but *idem effectus*, the same outward effect. And the reason why God calls himself here a jealous God, you will find in these following particulars. (1.)

Jealousy is distrustful and suspicious ; and God (though in propriety of speech he can doubt and fear nothing) is pleased to express his jealousy by such speeches as intimate distrust and diffidence. (2.) It is searching and inquisitive, and of all sins there is none that God more jealously observes than that of idolatry ; for this is the violation of that marriage faith which we have plighted to him. (2.) It is angry and revengeful, and God is pleased to style himself a jealous God, to express the heat of his wrath and indignation against sinners. (*Deut.* xxix. 20. *Zeph.* i. 18.)

2. What is it that is denounced ? : “ To visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.” In the general, God is said to visit, when after a long space of time, in which he seemed to have forgotten or taken no notice of men, he declares by his Providence that he has still observed their ways and doings. And this word may be taken either in a good part, as when God bestows great mercies and salvation on his people, he is said to visit them. So, (*Exodus* iii. 16, *Luke* i. 68,) or in an evil part, as here, when God rewards those sins, at which he seemed to connive, with deserving punishment. Now if it be the usual method of Divine Providence, to visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children, what great reason have parents to beware, that they do not lay in a stock of plagues and curses for their posterity ? And what great reason have they to render thanks and praise to God, who are born of holy and pious parents, such as treasure up not wrath for them, but prayers ?

3. The persons against whom this threatening is denounced : Those that hate him. And by the context, they are such as, contemning the only true God, prostitute themselves to idols ; but who they are, is more fully explained in the antithesis subjoined, “ Keeping mercy for thousands of those that love me and keep my commandments ;” for if those that keep God’s commandments, are lovers of him, (which CHRIST affirms, *John* xiv. 24,) it follows, that those who transgress his commandments, are haters of God.

4. The duration of that vengeance: It shall be to the third and fourth generation on their posterity; but on themselves, eternally. And yet even in this threatening there is mercy contained; for it is a mercy, that such a wicked race are not cut off, and cast out of his sight and grace for ever. And this mercy glorifies itself against judgment, in that he shows mercy unto thousands, but visits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation.

III. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy GOD in vain, &c.*

THE external worship of GOD consists of three parts, prostration of the body, (already treated of,) profession of the mouth, required in this command, and the observation of prefixed time, which falls under the fourth command. In this prohibition two things are to be inquired into:

1. What is meant by the Name of GOD? And this has sundry acceptations in the Scripture. (1.) Sometimes the name is taken for the nature and being of the Deity himself. (*Psalm* xx. 1; cxxxv. 3; cxv. 1; *Luke* xxiv. 47; *John* i. 12.) (2.) Sometimes the name of GOD is taken for the whole system of divine and heavenly doctrine revealed in the Scriptures. Thus, (*Psalm* xxii. 22,) “I will declare thy name unto my brethren,” which the Apostle cites, as spoken in the person of CHRIST; (*Heb.* ii;) and the meaning is, that CHRIST should declare to the world a true spiritual doctrine and way of worship, and teach them a religion, which should perfect their reason and save their souls. See *John* xvii. 6. 26; *Micah* iv. 5. (3.) The name of GOD is taken for that whereby GOD is called, and which in his nature and perfections are made known to men. Now these names of GOD are either his titles or his attributes. His titles are his name; and they are some of them absolute; such are those glorious titles, JAH, JEHOVAH, GOD, I AM, which are altogether incomprehensible and stupendous; others are relative, respecting us; so his name of Creator denotes his power in giving being to all things: Lord and King sig-

nify his dominion and authority in disposing and governing all that he has made: Father; his care and goodness in providing for us his offspring: Redeemer; his mercy in delivering us from temporal evils and calamities, but especially from eternal death and destruction. His attributes are his names; some of which are incommunicable, as his eternity, immortality, immutability, simplicity, &c.; others are communicable, as his mercy, goodness, holiness, and truth, &c., for some rays of them may be found in the creatures: But God is only merciful, good, &c., originally, infinitely, unchangeably, simply, and in the abstract. And the name of God in the text is to be understood concerning his titles and attributes, neither of which must be taken in vain.

2. What is it to take the name of God in vain? To take the name of God is to make use of it, either as the object of our thought, or the subject of our discourses. And we take his name in vain,

(1.) When we use it without propounding to ourselves a due end, or without due consideration and reverence, or in an undue and unlawful action.—First, without propounding to ourselves a due end. If the end be vain, the action must be so too; and there are but two ends that can justify the use of any of God's names, either his titles or attributes; and they are, the glory of God, the edification of ourselves and others. His name should never be uttered but where the subject of our discourse is serious and weighty. Secondly, without due consideration and reverence. Whensoever we make mention of Him, we ought seriously to ponder his infinite greatness and glory, and to bow our hearts in the deepest prostration before that name to which all the powers in heaven and earth bow down with most humble veneration. But is it possible for those who speak of God promiscuously and at random, to utter his name with reverence, when all the rest of their discourse is nothing but froth and levity? Nay, if they be reproved for it, will they not allege that for their excuse, which is their very sin,—that they did not consider it? The tongue

of man is called his glory; (*Psalm* lvii. 8;) and shall the glory of man be the dishonour of God? Shall that which was created to be a principal instrument of magnifying God's name, run it over without affection or reverence? The things which we most despise we use by by-words, and lay no great sense nor stress upon them. And where we speak of God without due consideration and reverence, we do but make him a by-word; which is the highest contempt and indignity that can be cast upon him.—Thirdly, in an undue and unlawful action, especially when it is brought to confirm a falsehood, either in perjury or heresy. And it is observable, that the same word here rendered vain, signifies also false and deceitful: And what greater sin can there be than to bring God to be a witness to our lie?

(2.) We take the name of God in vain in our duty and holy performances.—First, when we ask those things of God, which are unlawful or unwarrantable; as when we pray in behalf of our lusts, or out of envy or malice. Such prayers are vain, for either they shall not be granted, or if they be, it will be in wrath. Secondly, when we perform holy duties slightly, and without affection. Therefore, all hypocritical services, all battologies, and heartless ingeminations, are vain, and God's name is not sanctified but abused in them; for whatsoever we do in such a manner, as we may be certain God will not accept, is done in vain. Now God will accept of no performance which is not accompanied with the heart, and filled with most devout affections; and therefore they are performed in vain, and to no other effect but to increase our guilt and condemnation. Such invocations are but scoffings of God.

(3.) The name of God is profaned by unlawful oaths and execrations.—Oaths are assertory and promissory.—To make an oath lawful, it must be taken in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.—First, a warrantable oath must be accompanied with truth. We must take care that what we depose be true, and must be fully certain that the thing is as we attest it; for a man may be guilty of perjury in swearing that which is true, if he believe it

otherwise, or be doubtful of it. Therefore we should look, that our words agree with our mind, otherwise we shall be forsworn,—that the things agree with our words, or we shall be false-swearers.—Secondly, it must be taken in judgment, discreetly and deliberately, advising and pondering with ourselves, before we swear. We must consider both the matter, whether that be right and good, and the ends, whether they are duly propounded by us; and there are but two ends that can warrant an oath, the benefit of ourselves or others, and the glory of God.—Thirdly, it must be taken in righteousness. We must not bind ourselves by oath or vow, to do things impossible or sinful. The matter of a just oath ought to be possible, lawful, and honest. We should in all our promissory oaths caution and limit them with those reasonable exceptions, of—as far as we know, and can lawfully endeavour.

Falsehood and rashness make an oath unlawful. An oath is a sacred thing, and part of divine worship; therefore those that swear by any created being (as by their faith, truth, &c.) are guilty not only of vain swearing, but of idolatry too. And it is perjury to violate an oath conceived by creatures, because of the near relation that all creatures have to God, their Creator. (*Matt. xxiii. 22.*) Whosoever swears by any creature, does virtually swear by the Almighty Creator of it. All vehement asseverations have in them somewhat of the nature, and are dangerous beginnings of oaths; and those who accustom themselves to them, will in time think them not forcible enough to confirm their speeches, and so be brought to attest them by oaths. Speak truth simply and nakedly, without making any thing the pawn and pledge of it. Allow not yourself any form of asseveration, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay. There are several other violations of this command; as blasphemy, rash vows, unnecessary lots, &c.

The great positive duty required in this command, is, the reverencing and sanctifying the name of God, whensoever we make mention of him, or of any thing that relates to him; and asserting and vindicating to the utmost

of our power his name, whenever we hear it dishonoured. We are said to sanctify and glorify God, when in our most reverend thoughts we observe and admire his holiness, and the bright connexion of his attributes; and when we endeavour by all holy ways to declare them to others, that they may observe and admire them with us, and give to God that holy veneration, which is due to him. The best way and means to sanctify the name of God, is by enlarging his kingdom, and bringing in many to submit to his sceptre and government.

IV. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, &c.*

In these words we have a command, and the enforcement of it.

1. The command is to sanctify the Sabbath. And this is observable, that whereas all the rest are simply either positive or negative, this is both. Remember to keep it holy; and in it thou shalt not do any work. As if God took an especial care to fence us in, on all sides, to the observation of this precept.

The word Sabbath signifies rest, and cessation from labour, and from the slavery and drudgery of sin. And of this spiritual Sabbath, the temporal one is a sign and type. Sabbath is used also to signify the eternal rest of the blessed in heaven.

The Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation, (*Gen.* ii. 2, 3,) so that it is but one day younger than man, ordained for him in the state of innocence, that his faculties being then holy and excellent, he might employ them, especially on that day, in the singular and most spiritual worship of God, his Creator. This command is partly moral, in that it requires a due portion of our time to be dedicated to the service and worship of God; and partly positive, in that it prescribes the seventh day for that especial service, which the light and law of nature did not prefix: For if we lay aside the positive command of God, there is no one day in itself, better than another, and therefore there is a me-

mento prefixed to the command, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day," which is not added to any other precept; intimating to us that the observation of a special day is not a dictate of nature, but only an imposition of God, which he requires us to remember and bear in mind.—As the first institution of the Sabbath was by divine authority; so likewise is the change of it. For as God rested from his works on the last day of the week, so CHRIST rested from all his labours, sorrows, and affliction on this day, in which he fully completed the work of our redemption, and manifested it to be perfected by his resurrection from the dead. CHRIST sanctified this day by his resurrection; and the Apostles confirmed the observation of it, both by their writings and uniform practice. (*Acts* xx. 7.) Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, PAUL preached unto them, which plainly declares, that the solemn meetings and assemblies of Christians, were then on this day; the Jewish Sabbath beginning to wear out, and the Christian Sabbath, or the LORD'S-day, coming into its place and stead. Again, the public collections for the poorer saints were ordained by the Apostle to be made on this day. (*1 Cor.* xvi. 1, 2.) And why? but because the assemblies of Christians were held on this day, and so gave a better conveniency to gather their charity than at any other time. Again, this day is called the LORD'S-day. (*Rev.* i. 10.) Now put the force of these Scriptures together, and they will amount to the proof of the institution of this first day Sabbath. Another argument to prove this change, is the constant and uninterrupted practice of the church in all ages, from the time of man's redemption by the death and resurrection of CHRIST, to the present time. The practice of the Apostles has been already declared; and for the practice of the primitive church immediately after the Apostles, all ecclesiastical histories testify, that the solemn assemblies of Christians were held on this day. If to this we add the great blessing that God has poured out upon his people, in the plentiful effusion of his grace and SPIRIT on them, in his holy ordi-

nances celebrated on this day, it will be past all question, that this is the day which the LORD has made for himself, and therefore let us be glad and rejoice therein.

Concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath.

This command speaks of a two-fold sanctification of this day. The one which it hath already received from GOD; the other which it ought to receive from man. And the former is given as a reason of, and motive to the latter.—GOD has sanctified the Sabbath-day, by consecrating and setting it apart for his worship and service, and he also sanctified it in an effective sense, as he has appointed it to be the day whereon he does especially bless and sanctify us; yea, and possibly he makes the means of our sanctification to be more effectual on this day, than when they are dispensed on any other common days. GOD does then especially give out plentiful effusions of his SPIRIT, fills his ordinances with his grace and presence; and we may with a more confident faith expect a greater portion of spiritual blessings from him, when both the ordinances and the day are his, than when, though the ordinances be his, yet the day is ours.—As GOD sanctified the Sabbath, so man is commanded to sanctify it also. Now we are to sanctify it by devotion, observing it holy to the LORD, sequestering ourselves from common affairs to those of spiritual exercises, which he has required us to be conversant about on that day.

The sanctifying the Sabbath consists partly in abstaining from those things, whereby it would be profaned, and partly in the performance of those things which are required of us, and tend to promote the sanctity and holiness of it. In order to our due sanctifying of the Sabbath, we ought to abstain from the common and servile works of our calling. In it thou shalt not do any work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD. That exceptive particle, *but*, intimates to us, that none of that work which is lawful to be done on ordinary days, ought to be performed by us on

the Sabbath. Now this prohibition of working on the Sabbath, is strongly enforced by the concession of six days for our ordinary labour. A concession it may be called, considering the indulgence granted to us; but yet it is not merely a concession, but a command too: Six days shalt thou labour. These words are preceptive, requiring us diligently to attend that vocation and state of life, in which Divine Providence has placed us, and to perform the offices of it with care and conscience: For it is not said, Thou mayest labour, but Thou shalt labour. So that all idleness and sloth is expressly forbidden by this command. But this precept is not to be understood absolutely and unlimitedly, but with a just restraint and exception; that is, Thou shalt labour six days ordinarily; unless any of them be set apart either by thy own private devotion, or by public authority, for the immediate worship and service of God. And that this is of necessity to be understood, appears, if we consider how many days in the week God himself did dedicate in those feasts which he commanded the Jews strictly to observe, notwithstanding that they were enjoined six days labour: As every New Moon, the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Atonement, and of Tabernacles. And not only did they account themselves obliged to keep these days holy, which were enjoined by the divine command, but those also appointed by human authority: As the Feast of the Purim, (*Esther* ix. 21,) and the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple; (*Ezra* vi. 16;) which, though but of human institution, CHRIST was pleased to honour with his presence. (*John* x. 22.) Besides, we read frequently of fasts, both personal and national, appointed on some emergent occasions. And the like to these, without doubt, either our own private devotion, or the public authority of the nation, may in the like circumstances impose on us, without violating this command of six days labour. But though this six days labour was not so strictly required as not sometimes to admit the intervention of a holy rest; yet the seventh day's rest was so exactly to be observed, as not to admit any bodily labour, or secular employment. And we

find this command strictly enforced by the double sanction of a promise and threatening. (*Jer.* xvii.)

Notwithstanding this rest and cessation from labour, that is required on the LORD'S-day, yet there are three sorts of works that may and ought to be performed on it, how great soever our bodily labour may be in doing them. And they are,

(1.) Works of piety, which are indeed the proper works of the day.

(2.) Works of necessity, and of great convenience. And we find our Saviour defending his disciples against the exceptions of the Pharisees, for plucking the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them on the Sabbath. (*Matt.* xii. 1, &c.) Only take this caution, that you neglect not the doing of these things till the LORD'S-day, which might be well done before, and then plead necessity or convenience for it.

(3.) Works of charity and mercy. 'This day is instituted for a memorial of GOD'S great mercy towards us; and therefore in it we are obliged to show charity and mercy: Charity towards men, and mercy to the very beasts themselves. (*Matt.* xii. 12; *Luke* xiii. 15.)

The sanctification of the Sabbath does especially consist in a diligent and conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of GOD, and the duties of his worship, both in public and in private with our families, and in secret by ourselves.

2. The enforcement of this command is more particular, and with greater care and instance, than we find in any other command; for GOD has here condescended to use three cogent arguments, to press the observation of this law upon us. (1.) The first is taken from his own example, whom certainly it is our glory, as well as our duty, to imitate in all things, in which he has propounded himself to be our pattern. The LORD rested the seventh day, and therefore rest ye also. (2.) The second, from that bountiful and liberal portion of time, that he has allowed us for the affairs and business of this present life: Six days shalt thou

labour and do all thy work ; and therefore it is but fit and equitable, that the seventh should be given to God, who has so freely given the rest to thee. (3.) The third, from the dedication of this day to his own immediate worship and service : The LORD blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it. So that it is no less a sin than sacrilege, to purloin any part of that time which God has thus consecrated to himself, and to employ it about their sinful or secular actions.

V. Honour thy Father and Mother, &c.

We may observe, that God first prescribes what concerns himself, and then what concerns us, which teaches us,

I. That in all our actions, whether civil or sacred, God ought principally to be regarded ; his glory ought to be our highest aim and end. This we are to seek in the first place ; and for the sake and interest of this, to promote the good and benefit of men.

II. It teaches us to observe our due distance from God. He challenges all possible reverence from us ; insomuch that he will not permit so great a disparagement to his honour, as to have his concerns intermingled with ours, no, not in the same table.

Men may be considered either as under some peculiar differences, or else in their common natures. The duties that belong unto them under the first acceptation, as they are differenced into superiors and inferiors, (which are co-relatives,) are prescribed in this command. There are other duties which appertain universally to all, whether they be superiors or inferiors, or equal among themselves ; and these are contained in the five following precepts, all of which do respect our neighbour, either in his person, or in his exterior gifts of wealth or good name.—His person is to be considered either naturally, as he is this individual man, and so the sixth command provides for his security ; or nuptially, as he is in the state of marriage, and so care is taken of him in the seventh.—If we consider him in his external

gifts, so his estate and substance is secured by the eighth commandment, his reputation and good name by the ninth. And has a strong fence set about him, and also about the other laws, that neither of them be violated. God has not only prohibited the outward acts of gross and flagitious crimes, but the inward and lurking motions to evil in our thoughts and affections, and this in the tenth commandment. In the due performance of all these consists the observance of that second great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (*Matt.* xxii. 39.)

We may observe here a ray of God's infinite wisdom, in the order and method of this commandment; for after he had prescribed laws for his own honour, his next care is for the honour of our parents, because they are, next under him, the authors and original of our lives and beings. This command is very large and comprehensive, extending itself to all that are our superiors. Governors and magistrates are to be accounted and revered by us as fathers. Indeed they are *patres patriæ*, for all government was at first domestic and paternal, and magistrates succeeding in the place and office of parents are now the public fathers, having the same power devolved on them which formerly resided in the fathers of families. Hence we read that common and successive name of the Philistines, Abimelek, which signifies, the King, my father. The master of a private family is a father, not only with respect to his children, but to his servants. And therefore we find that NAAMAN was called father by his servants. (*2 Kings* v. 13.) A teacher in any art, science, or invention, is called a father. (*Gen.* iv. 20, 21.) A superior in wisdom and counsel is called a father. So in JOSEPH'S speech, "God hath made me a father to PHARAOH." (*Gen.* xlv. 8.) The Ministers of the Gospel have likewise the title of fathers conferred on them. Thus St. PAUL tells the Church, that he was their father, having begotten them through the Gospel. (*2 Cor.* iv. 15.) Superiors in any gift of Divine Providence, whether of riches, or of age, or of knowledge, and the like, are to be revered and honoured by us as fathers. (*1 Tim.* v. 1. 2.) So that

this word Father is very copious, and takes in many relations and states of men, both in the family, and in the Church, and commonwealth.

First. In the family.

I. Duties of husband and wife.

Common duties to be performed by both mutually are, fervent prayers to God, severally and together, for his blessings and graces upon them, and for wisdom to demean themselves towards each other aright. Conjugal love. Faithfulness to the bed. Communion of themselves, of their estates, and habitations. Mutual bearing one another's weaknesses, with prudent and pious endeavours to heal and remove them. The nurture and education of children. The government of their family, for whom they are to provide not only what is requisite for their corporeal good, but much more for their spiritual; and therefore they ought to observe constant family duties, and choose honest and religious servants, and, as far as in them lies, keep out the infection of evil company from entering within their doors.

Husband's duties.

(1.) Conjugal love. A wife is to be loved above parents or children. A man should love his wife as his own body, as himself. (*Eph. v.*) He must be as careful and tender of her good, as of his own, and resent an injury done to her, as much as if it were done to himself. By marriage two are said to be made one flesh, and no man yet ever hated his own flesh. (*Eph. v.*) All violence and outrage against a wife is as unnatural, as it would be for a man to beat and wound himself. (*Ver. 25.*) "Husbands, love your wives, even as CHRIST also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." CHRIST loved the Church, his spouse, though there were many blemishes and imperfections in her, and so as to leave his FATHER and cleave to his wife. He loved her better than his own life, and shed his most precious blood for her, and rather than the wrath of God should fall on his beloved spouse, he thrusts himself between, and receives those heavy blows on his own person. So sincerely ought men to love their wives.

(2.) Provident care for her. "He ought," says the Apostle, "to nourish and cherish her, as CHRIST doth the Church."

(3.) Protection from wrongs and injustice.

(4.) Instruction and direction. The husband is the head of the wife, even as CHRIST is the head of the Church. (*Eph. v.*) Therefore as all direction and consolation is derived from CHRIST, so should the husband derive down and communicate knowledge, and comfort, and guidance to the wife. And St. PETER requires of husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, to be able to advise and inform them in all emergent cases, especially concerning God and their souls. But if the wife be endued with a greater measure of prudence and solid knowledge than the husband, it is then his part to hearken to her advice, and to yield, not indeed to the authority of the counsellor, as she is bound to do, but to the authority of the counsel. And this she ought to tender him with all respect and submission, not having power to enjoin, but only with modesty propounding it, and with meekness persuading him to embrace it.

(5.) Tenderness and mildness towards her, not causelessly grieving her, either by speeches or actions.

(6.) Giving her due respect and honour. Think honourably of her, as the person God saw fittest for you, and be not tempted, so much as in thought, to believe that any other could have been so proper or beneficial to you. Speak honourably of her, not divulging any of her failings or imperfections, but giving her the due praise of those virtues and graces that are in her. Treat her honourably, neither making thyself a servant to her humour, nor making her a slave to thine; but use her as thy bosom friend, and in every thing, but authority, equal to thyself.

(7.) A prudent maintaining and managing his authority. His authority over her is God's, who has entrusted him with it. Therefore it is not basely to be betrayed, nor to be maintained with a rigour and tyrannical violence; but the most effectual way of keeping it up is by prudence and

gravity, soberness and piety, and a staid, exemplary, and strict life. This will cause a reverent esteem in the wife, and in the whole family. And it is a hard matter for a man to be revered by others, who does not first reverence himself.

Wife's duties. (1.) Subjection and obedience, which is required from them as absolutely as unto CHRIST himself. (*Eph.* v. 22, 23; and the Apostle enforces it by sundry reasons, as you may see, *1 Cor.* xi. 3, 8, 9; *1 Tim.* ii. 12, 13, 14.) This duty is frequently expressed, "Submit yourselves;" and the manner of performing it, "Be subject as to the LORD; submit in the LORD;" which phrase carries in it three things. First. A motive to obedience. It is done to the LORD. And though through the froward and peevish humours of the husband, she may have no other encouragement to observe and obey him; yet, to the conscientious wife, this will be encouragement enough, that the LORD will accept and reward her obedience. Marriage being a type of our mystical union to CHRIST, he especially is concerned that the duties of that relation be performed, so as to bear some proportion to that spiritual mystery. Secondly. A direction how to perform it; it must be as to the LORD. She must obey her husband, not only with a design of pleasing him, but the LORD CHRIST. It is not the husband only that commands, but the LORD, and the wife must eye his sovereign authority, through the authority of her husband: And then it will appear, that though there be no necessity in what he requires, yet there is a necessity she should perform what is required. Thirdly. The words import also a limitation of her obedience. The wife must submit and obey, but in the LORD, and as to the LORD; that is, only in lawful things, wherein by her obedience to her husband she may not offend against God. And excepting this, in all other cases the wife is absolutely bound to obey the will and command of her husband to the utmost of her power, even though he should abuse his authority, and command what is unnecessary and unfit, unless she can meekly persuade him to revoke his com-

mand. Nothing can excuse her obligation to obedience, but the unlawfulness or impossibility of what is enjoined.

(2.) Respect and reverence, (*Eph.* v. 33,) cherishing a high esteem of him, if not for his gifts and graces, yet at least, as her lord and head, superior to her by God's appointment; looking upon him as the person whom God has particularly chosen for her, as the fittest to be her head and guide, having a care to please him, endeavouring to conform herself to his inclination, having a joy in pleasing, and a grief in offending him, rejoicing when he rejoices, being sad when he mourns.

(3.) Helpfulness. To his soul in furthering his graces, and wisely and opportunely admonishing him to his duty, at least by a holy and blameless conversation. To his body, by cherishing and tendering of it. To his good name, by endeavouring to augment and preserve it, reporting well of him, and silencing and convincing any scandalous rumours concerning him. To his estate; if she cannot bring in any thing to increase the stock, yet she ought prudently and frugally to manage what her husband entrusts her with, and not to waste it vainly and profusely. Nor ought she to alienate any thing from her husband, without his consent, either expressly declared, or upon good grounds supposed to be tacitly granted.

(4.) Modesty in apparel and behaviour, and being adorned with a meek and quiet spirit.

II. Duties of parents and children.—Children are to honour their parents.

1. By reverencing them, having an awful love and a fearfulness to offend, out of the respect they bear them. And this reverence is to be expressed, both in speeches and gestures. Their speeches must be full of respect and honour, giving to them the highest titles that their quality and condition will admit. They must likewise be very few, (for talkativeness is an argument of disrespect,) and very humble and submissive. They must comport themselves with all lowliness and modesty before them, in bowing the body, and showing all other external signs of respect.

They must not, upon any pretence of infirmity in them, despise them either in outward behaviour, or so much as in their hearts; but they are still to reverence them, and to bear with their infirmities, whether natural or vicious; and endeavour to hide and cover them like SHEM and JAPHETH; and that in such a manner as even themselves might not behold them.

(2.) By obedience, active in whatsoever is not contrary to the will and law of God, passive in whatsoever they impose upon us that is so. Therefore we are to obey them in whatsoever honest calling and employment they will set us, and we ought not to enter into wedlock without their knowledge, or against their consent; but children have a negative vote, and ought not to be forced against their own will and consent. In unlawful commands, when it is necessary to refuse compliance, we should take care to do it in such a modest and respectful manner, that it may appear it is conscience only, and not stubbornness moves us to it; for children are not by such commands discharged from obedience, but only directed to choose the passive part of it, and to bear their wrath and choler; yea, and their punishments too, with all patience and submission.

(3.) By remuneration and retribution, requiting the benefits we have received from them, so far as we are able, and they need. When they are fallen into poverty or decay, or otherwise require assistance from us, we are obliged liberally, according to our proportion, to afford it; but we are not to assist them in poverty and lowness of estate only, but in all their wants of what kind soever, whether weakness or sickness of body, decayedness of understanding, &c.

(4.) By hearkening to their good instructions, imitating their godly practices, and praying for them. Though good instruction be for the matter of it always to be embraced from whomsoever it shall proceed; yet when it shall come from a parent, it obliges us not only because it is good, but because it is authoritative: Neither are we only to hearken to their counsel, but also to pray for them, and to imitate

their holy examples. And therefore it is commended in SOLOMON, that he walked in the steps of his father, DAVID.

Parents' duties respect either the temporal or spiritual good of their children. As for their temporal good, they owe them protection and provision of necessities and conveniences, according to the rank and degree in which the Divine Providence has set them. We are to nourish and sustain them, and to protect them from all incident evils; nor are we to provide for them only for the present, but according to our ability we are to take care for their future subsistence; and if we cannot leave them a patrimony, we are to leave them an art or calling, whereby through the blessing of GOD they may procure their own livelihood. And if we must place them out to a vocation, we must endeavour with all our prudence to fit it to their genius and inclination; still remembering, that if we piously design unto the work of the LORD, it should be those who are most pregnant, and whom GOD has endued with the greatest gifts for so high a ministration.

In respect of the spiritual good of their children. They are to present them to holy baptism, to instruct and admonish them, to educate them in the fear and knowledge of GOD, to teach them the fundamental truths and principles of the Christian religion, and in a manner most suitable to their capacity and discretion, and to form their wills, while they are flexible, to the love of piety and virtue. This way of instruction is; First, by reading to them or causing them to read the Scripture, and pointing out to them those observables, which are most agreeable to their age and apprehensions. Secondly, by catechising and instructing them in the grounds and principal doctrines of religion. A continued discourse is not so informing, nor does it fasten and rivet instruction into young minds so well, as Thirdly, by endeavouring to make them in love with duty, offering them rewards and invitations, and whenever they do well, encouraging them to go on.

Another duty of parents is to give good examples, to set

before their children the copies and patterns of those virtues which they teach. Even a heathen satirist could say, *Maxima debetur pucro reverentia*, we ought to reverence and stand in awe of children, that they see nothing vicious or dishonest by us, not so much for the shame of it, as the example. It is the boast and glory of children to be and do like their parents, and if they think it not a part of duty to imitate their vices, yet they cannot but conclude themselves secure from reproof and correction. If neither instructions, encouragements, nor good examples, will prevail; then correction and discipline is necessary, and becomes a duty. And let that first be tried in words, not in railing and foul language, but in sober, yet sharp reproof; but if that fail too, then use the rod. And let this correction be given in such a manner as may be most likely to do good, namely, Timely, not suffering the child to run on in any ill till it has got a habit, and become hardened by age or spirit against the fear and smart of correction; and moderately, not exceeding the quality of the fault, nor the tenderness of the child. Immoderate, ungoverned correction is so far from profiting children, that it often exasperates them, and makes them the more stubborn and untractable, or else it only dispirits and stupifies them; and a sour, harsh, unkind behaviour will also produce the latter effect of dispiriting them. And therefore the Apostle has twice cautioned parents against this way of discipline. (*Eph.* vi. 4; *Col.* iii. 21.) Lastly, correction must not be given in anger; if it be, it will lose its effect on the child, who shall think it is corrected, not because it has done a fault, but because the parent is angry: Whereas care should be taken to make the child as sensible of the fault, as of the smart.

After children are grown up, the parent is still to watch over them in respect of their souls; to observe how they practise the precepts which were given them, and accordingly to exhort, encourage, or reprove, as they find occasion.

Another duty of parents is to bless their children. (1.)

By their prayers. They are by daily and earnest prayer to commend them to God's protection and blessing, both for their spiritual and temporal estate. (2.) By their piety, they are to be such persons themselves, as that a blessing may descend from them upon their posterity. Parents' blessings have great influence on their children, so likewise have their curses oftentimes been direfully fulfilled, not only to the ruin of the children, but the too late sorrow and repentance of the parents. Lastly. Parents should take heed that they use their power over their children, with equity and moderation, not to oppress them with unreasonable commands, only to exercise their own authority; but in all things of weight, to consider the real good of their children, and to press them to nothing which may not consist with that.

III. Duties of masters and servants.—A servant ought, where his choice is left him free, to choose a faithful master, one that fears God, and will be willing to promote the spiritual good and salvation of his soul; and a master should use prudent care in the choice of his servants, choosing such as have ability to discharge their place and manage the affairs committed to them, and conscientiousness and piety, in doing faithful service, not to them only, but to God, the common Master of them both.

Servants' Duties. (1.) Obedience to all the lawful commands of his master, (*Col.* iii. 22,) even though they should be impertinent, or too imperious and tyrannical. (2.) A patient suffering their reproofs and corrections; yea, so patient as not to answer again, (*Tit.* ii. 9,) though he has given no just cause for reproof and correction. (1 *Pet.* ii. 18, &c.) But if innocent, calmly, and at fit seasons, to represent unto his master the justice of his actions, and the reasons that moved him to them; and if faulty, to amend the fault he is rebuked for. (3.) A reverential fear of his master; (1 *Pet.* ii. 11;) which fear is to be expressed in their words and actions, by forbearing any clamours or irreverent mutterings in their presence; their words must be few and humble, giving them all those respectful titles

that belong justly to their place and quality, by speaking well of them in their absence, concealing their infirmities; by comporting themselves with all the expressions of modesty and respect before them, and readily doing, not only what their masters shall command, but what they judge will be pleasing and acceptable to them, (*Psalms* cxxiii. 2,) striving not only to fulfil, but even to prevent their commands, by the readiness and respect of their obedience. (4.) Diligence in his master's affairs, fidelity and trust in what is committed to his charge, not defrauding him of the least value. (*Tit.* iii. 9.) Carefulness in preserving his estate, not wasting it by riotous living or negligence. (5.) Truth in all they say. (6.) Serving with a good will and in singleness of heart, not grudgingly, as of constraint, and with eye-service, but readily and cheerfully, as unto the LORD. (*Eph.* vi. 5, &c.)

Masters' Duties. (1.) To use a prudent and discreet government, such as may maintain their authority, and yet not be tyrannical. Therefore it should be a master's care to demean himself gravely and awfully before his servants; his very countenance and comportment should be enough to beget reverence in them. Government consists in command and correction; but that which mostly tends to make them effectual is good example. A master ought wisely to enjoin his servants what they should do without rigour or revilings, nor yet should he prostitute his authority by submissive entreaties. There should be such an equal mixture of mildness with gravity, and love with authority, that the servant should not only be compelled, but inclined by it to obedience. But this wisdom in commanding respects not only the manner, but also the matter of the command. And as to this, he ought to command nothing but what is lawful, possible, and reasonable. Though a thing be not simply impossible in itself, but only to the servant, considering his inability or employments; or if it be hugely inconvenient, or prejudicial, or unseasonable, the master ought not in conscience or prudence to exact it. Neither should any of his commands be vain and impertinent, but

he should have some swaying reason sufficient to satisfy his judgment and conscience, though perhaps not always to be communicated to the servant.

Correction ought to be used to stubborn and disobedient servants ; but prudence must be the measure of what discipline is fit for them, according to their age, disposition, and the nature of their offence. A reproof will work more effectually on some, than stripes ; and those of ingenuous spirits will either be discouraged or exasperated by too rigorous usage. No correction is to be inflicted out of passion or revenge, but either for reformation and amendment, or for example's sake to terrify others from the same or the like offences. But be sure that the corrections be not immoderate, and too severe. Generally reproof is the best discipline, and if they will not be amended with that, though a sharper method be lawful, and in some cases necessary, yet the most prudent course is to discharge them.

(2.) Provision for the temporal and spiritual good of his servants. As to the first, he is bound to supply them with things necessary, according to the agreement and compact between them. He ought to provide food and raiment, or in lieu of any of these, faithfully to pay the agreed wages. As to the second, every master is to be a priest and a prophet in his own family, as well as a king. He is to instruct them in the will and laws of God, to rectify their errors and mistakes, to pray with and for them, to direct them in the way to heaven, and to walk before them in it by his holy and pious example. God has entrusted thee with their souls, and will require them at thy hands. What a heavy doom will pass on thee when God shall demand at thy hands the souls of thy servants or children, which have perished through thy default ! Let not a day pass without its stated hours of prayers in your family, and allow them time to bestow on their souls in secret. Instruct those that are ignorant, reduce those that are erroneous, admonish and rebuke with all authority those that are faulty, discard those that are contumacious and incorrigible. Let not a scorner and derider of piety and holi-

ness remain within your doors, and be careful that both you and your family do strictly observe and sanctify the LORD'S-day. Prepare your families by private duties for public, let none of them stay at home from the ordinances but on great and urgent necessity ; take an account of their profiting by what they hear ; be as careful to see your family well employed in the service of God on that day, as to see them employed in thy own service the other days of the week, therefore be not long nor unnecessarily from them.

Second. In the church.

I. Duties of Pastors and their Flocks. Ministers should look to it that they be rightly called, that they do not thrust themselves into so sacred a function, unless they be duly set apart thereto. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God." (*Heb.* v. 4.) And God complains of those prophets whom he had not sent, and yet they ran ; and to whom he had not spoken, and yet they prophesied. (*Jer.* xxiii. 21.) They must have an inward call, which consists both in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and also in the inclination of their will to use them for God's glory, in this holy ministration. Now the gifts they should be endued with, are a competent knowledge in the truths of the Gospel, sanctifying grace, and an holy life and conversation.

Pastor's Duties. (1.) To be good examples to the flock. (1 *Tim.* iii. iv.) They must be exemplary both in themselves, and their families. (*Titus* i. 7, 8. 1 *Tim.* iv. 12.) They must be serious and circumspect in their conversation. (2.) A diligent and conscientious employing of their gifts and talents ; they must be able and willing to teach, well grounded in the knowledge and doctrine of CHRIST. They ought to be instant in season and out of season. (1 *Cor.* ix. 16. 2 *Tim.* iv. 2.) Their doctrine should be sound, such as cannot be condemned. (*Titus* ii. 1.) It must have authority either from the express word of Scripture, or the analogy of faith, rationally deduced from Scripture. Profitable, not setting before the people unintelligible notions, of thin, airy speculations. Plain, and suited to the capacities of the

hearers, as much as can be, without disgusting any ; grave and solid, not slovenly and too much neglected, nor yet too nice and sprucely dressed ; powerfully, and with authority. (1 *Tim.* iv. 11.) They must deliver God's message boldly. (3.) Other duties are hospitality, according to the measure of their estates. (1 *Tim.* iii. 2. *Titus* i. 8.) Gravity in their discourse and all their converse, neither speaking nor doing any thing unseemly ; a pious and assiduous care in visiting the sick, diligence in catechising and instructing the younger, in the principles of faith and religion.

II. Duties of the people. (1.) Obedience in being persuaded by their good advice and admonitions. (*Heb.* xiii. 17.) When they propound the will of God revealed in his word, or in cases not so clearly determined therein, do give their judgment as those who have found mercy to be accounted faithful, they may challenge our obedience to it, in the name of CHRIST ; for we find that in those particular cases wherein the Apostle had no express revelation from CHRIST, yet he prescribes to the Corinthians what he judges fit for them to do, and by that direction obliges their practice, not indeed simply and absolutely, yet so that in such circumstances as the Apostle supposes, they sinned if they had done otherwise than he directed them. (2.) To honour their Ministers, as their spiritual fathers. (1 *Tim.* v. 17.) All must have that honour given them which is due to their function, but those who rule the flock well must have this honour doubled to them. Now this double honour is commonly taken for the honour of reverence, and the honour of maintenance. They are to be honoured and esteemed for their office and for their work's sake, and ought to have a competent and liberal maintenance, such as may enable them to relieve the necessities of others, to provide comfortably for their own family, and to use hospitality in their houses.

Persons eminent in grace, ought (1.) to beware that they do not despise their weaker brethren in their hearts, nor with a censorious austerity reject those whom God has received. They should beware of spiritual pride, which

makes men envious towards those who excel them, and scornful towards those who fall short ; for when men grow conceited of their own excellencies and attainments, they will be ready to condemn other men's duties as formal hypocrisy, and their sins as total apostasy. They will mistake the smoking flax for a reeking dunghill, and be forward imperiously to cast them out of God's family, though themselves were but lately received into it out of mere charity. The more eminent our graces are, the more need we have to pray and strive for humility. (2.) They should improve their grace to the benefit and advantage of others. Hath God endued thee with a clear and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel ? Know that this light was given thee to diffuse and scatter abroad its rays about thee, to inform the ignorant, guide the doubting, confirm the wavering, resolve the scrupulous, reduce the erroneous, and convince the malicious opposers of the truth. Or has the HOLY SPIRIT kindled in thy breast a flame of Divine affections, and is it not to this end, that thou shouldest breathe warmth into the languishing desires of others, by holy conferences and spiritual discourses, illustrating the beauty of holiness, excellency of true piety in itself, and the reward it brings after it ? Or hath God exercised thee with grievous trials and violent temptations ? Wherefore is it, but that you should the better know how to succour those that are tempted, and by your own experiences counsel and comfort those who are ready to sink under their load ? Expound to them the depths and methods of SATAN, unravel his wiles and subtilties. (2 *Cor.* 1. 4.) Or if you are not so fit either for instruction or counsel ; yet at least, let your graces be beneficial to others, by a holy and exemplary conversation. If your graces cannot shine through your gifts, yet at least let them shine through your life, that others seeing your good works may give glory to your heavenly Father.

Duty of others towards them. (1.) Highly to love and esteem them. (1 *John* v. 1.) To associate with them, make them their bosom-friends, their confidants and companions.

(2) To imitate their holy examples. If others outstrip you, mend your pace, endeavour to overtake them, tread in the same steps, and do your utmost to keep even with them: Envy not their graces, but emulate them. But here be sure you set your pattern right; propound those to yourselves for examples, who have fixed principles and sober practices; who are grave and solid, and in all the duties that belong to a Christian conversation, labour to do them substantially rather than ostentatiously. And yet there is no man that walks so uprightly, but that sometimes he may step awry; and therefore be not led by a blind and implicit adherence to them, but continually eye the rule, and whereinsoever they forsake that, therein forsake them.

Third. In the Common-wealth.

Magistrates and subjects. Subjects owe to their magistrates and rulers, (1.) honour and reverence. First, in their thoughts, looking upon them as the lively and visible image of God upon earth. The Divine perfections are the highest object of our reverence; therefore as you would esteem and honour any for their wisdom or holiness, because there are some lineaments of the image of God, so you ought to reverence those to whom the Almighty has communicated his adorable power and authority; for this also is the image of God in them: Yea, though they should bear no other resemblance to God, neither in his wisdom nor justice; yet that authority alone with which they stand invested, challenges our respect and reverence; for in this at least they are like to God, and whosoever slights and despises them, slights and despises one of God's glorious attributes shining forth in them. We must not harbour any under-valuing and ill thoughts of them; but where magistrates are just and merciful, wise and holy, we ought to give them the greatest reverence that can belong to creatures, and to esteem and respect them next unto God himself. Secondly, in our speeches, speaking what good of them we know, and prudently concealing their vices or infirmities. Beware that you do not by misinterpretation

traduce the actions of your lawful rulers, nor hearken to those who do. Thirdly, with our substance, when the necessity of their affairs and public concerns call for supply. Tributes and public payments are theirs, when made so by law ; for the rest is ours no otherwise than by the same law. And though sometimes the burden may fall heavy, yet we ought freely and cheerfully to contribute. (2.) Obedience in performing their lawful commands ; and where they are wicked and unlawful, in suffering what they threaten. (3.) Fervent and earnest prayer for them. (1 *Tim.* ii. 1.)

Subordinate Magistrates. These should be men fearing God, men of truth, and hating covetousness. (*Exod.* xviii. 21.) Their chief duty is to see that the laws be executed according to their full intent without respect of persons, neither fearing to punish the rich, nor sparing to punish the poor ; making no difference between one person and another, where the cause makes none. They should have that courage and firmness, which may make them as inflexible as the rule of justice itself is ; neither being frightened by the power or threats of the great, nor softened with the cries of the mean, but moved only by the cause. They should be divested of all passions, private subjects, private interests and affections, and be impartial in the execution of justice upon the mightiest offenders, as well as the meanest ; upon their dearest friends and relations, as well as upon strangers or enemies.

2. Persons excelling in the gifts of the mind, in knowledge, wisdom, &c. These ought to improve them to the good and advantage of others, to guide and advise for the benefit of mankind and the glory of God ; for these gifts, though they are not sanctifying, may be very serviceable to the church. These, though they should possess such gifts without any sanctifying and saving graces, yet are very considerable men ; and our duty is to esteem and reverence them, to love their excellencies and encourage their labours, to praise God for them, and pray for an increase of their gifts. How much more then, when their natural

and acquired endowments are joined with sanctifying grace ; and the love of the truth does as much possess their hearts, as the knowledge of it does their heads !

3. Aged persons. Another superiority which God has granted some over others, is that of old age, which is of itself reverend and awful, and we ought to give due respect to it. (*Lev. xix. 32. Isaiah iii. 5.*) A reverend awe before them is not only a point of manners, but part of a moral and express duty. And if such respect be due to them from others, they ought to reverence themselves, and by grave, prudent, and holy actions, to put a crown of glory on their own grey heads. (*Prov. xvi. 31.*)

4. Persons excelling in riches and honour. Their duty is to be humble towards their inferiors, knowing that these are only external goods, and to communicate to the relief of others' necessities, that they may be rich in good works, and make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. The duty of others towards them is to pay them all due respects, according to what God has bestowed on them, to acknowledge the riches of God in making them rich, and to endeavour to promote, as far as in them lies, the spiritual good of their souls. A rich man may be more universally instrumental either of good or evil, than others can : Therefore to win such a one to the faith, to preserve him stable in it, is a most charitable work : Not only to their souls, but to the church of CHRIST, the affairs of which may be much advanced by such a man's wealth and interest.

Observe, That in all these mutual duties, it is no excuse for the one party to fail of the most conscientious and careful performance of what belongs to him, because the other does so.

Concerning the promise of long life added to the precept, we may observe, that whereas the free and genuine administration of the Gospel promises eternal life and the joys and glories of heaven to believers, the old law runs generally upon earthly and temporal blessings, which must not be so understood, as if the promises of the law were

only for these earthly concernments; but because this procedure was most suitable to the whole system of that pedagogy, wherein God thought fit to discipline them by types, and to lead them unto the sun by shadows. But though these promises made to the Jews were thus typical, yet those figures were not altogether so figurative, as not to be properly understood and fulfilled. Though heaven were typified by Canaan, yet God's veracity would have suffered, if he had brought them to heaven, the true land of promise, and not given them their inheritance in the earthly Canaan. So likewise, that God might be true to his promise, it is not enough that he rewards the obedient with eternal life, but his faithfulness stands obliged to prolong their temporal life to such a duration, as may be fit at least to make a type of the everlasting rest. Neither doth the more spiritual dispensation of the Gospel look on this blessing of long life as a thing below its cognizance, but propounds it as a promise of moment; though it be now divested of its typical use, and stands for no more than itself signifies. And therefore we find that the Apostle puts a value on this fifth commandment, for this very reason, that it is the first with promise. (*Eph. vi. 23.*) And the same Apostle tells us, "That godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come." But since this life is nothing else but a preparative to eternity, neither it nor any thing in it can be called good, but only as it relates to our eternal state. And therefore all promises of earthly blessings must necessarily imply this condition; that they shall be literally fulfilled to us, if they may promote our eternal happiness; otherwise they would not be promises, but threatenings, and that which we apprehend a blessing, would indeed prove no other to us than a snare and a curse.

VI. *Thou shalt not kill.*

THIS precept forbids all wrong and injuries to the person of another, considered naturally as he is in himself, and that in respect of his soul as well as his body; for both are included

in his person. And therefore by the second general rule, the doing all possible good of every kind to the souls and bodies of men, is enjoined. But this is not all, for the law of God is spiritual and searches the heart; and therefore, as our Saviour himself explains this command, anger (in which is included every temper contrary to love) is likewise here forbidden; and consequently love, or an universal benevolence, is the great duty hereby required. And, as the love of ourselves is to be the standard and rule of our love to others, for thus we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves; it follows that the regular love of ourselves is also implied in this command, the having an earnest, zealous concern for our own happiness and welfare, the doing all we can to preserve ourselves free and vigorous, to glorify God in our station, and carefully avoiding whatsoever may be injurious to our own souls or bodies: All fretting, vain grief, worldly sorrows, melancholy sin; and whatsoever may wound and hurt the soul in respect of its principal faculties of the understanding, will and affections, and in regard of its present and eternal happiness; all needless endangering of ourselves, self-murder, and whatsoever tends to injure our health, or shorten our lives. Those who destroy themselves (whether their souls or bodies) do virtually and interpretatively destroy the whole world, because they destroy that fundamental law, which should regulate their love to their neighbours; and which is the stated rule, according to which they should endeavour after their welfare and preservation.

Sins forbidden. Not only the actual sin of murder is here forbidden, but according to the fourth general rule all degrees and causes of it; such as envy, which gave occasion to the first murder committed in the world, and is a foul vice that turns the happiness and welfare of others into our misery and torment; anger, for no anger is allowed but that which is directed against sin; and the word *εἰς* without a cause, in *Matt. v. 22*, is left out in many of the Greek copies; and it seems most agreeable to the context that it should be so; prejudice against, and the rash judging of others; hatred, malice, contempt, rejoicing at the fall of others,

and every unkind thought harboured in the heart against our neighbour. Thus far respects the inward man. In regard of our outward acts,

All injuries to the soul are forbidden, such as causeless afflicting or grieving any one, drawing him into sin, which wounds and kills the soul, either directly by commanding of it, by counselling or advising to any wickedness, by enticing and alluring to it, as when we set before him the pleasure or profit he shall reap by it, by assisting and helping him either in contriving or acting it; or indirectly, by setting an evil example, by encouragement of sin, which we are guilty of when either by approving, or at least not showing a dislike, we give him confidence to go on in his wickedness, by justifying and defending any sinful act of another, by bringing up any reproach on strict living, as those do who have the ways of God in derision.

Injuries to the body are forbidden : Such as duels, unlawful war, all ways of procuring abortion, revenge, maiming, stripes, wounds, persuading to drunkenness, or to any thing which tends to the shortening of life, setting persons at variance, stirring them up to anger and revenge, all hurt to the body and life of another, depriving him of his liberty ; murder, which we are likewise guilty of when we command or counsel it to be done, or consent to it, when we conceal it, or if we are in authority, do not punish it.

All contemptuous, slighting, reviling, and reproachful language is likewise forbidden. (*Matt. v. 22.*) And so are all contentions and quarrels, threatening, ill wishes or curses, and in general, whatsoever may prejudice the safety of our neighbour, or tempt us to see him perish, when it is in our power to rescue and relieve him. Unmercifulness even towards brute creatures, and cruel tormenting of them, not to satisfy our occasions and necessities, but our own unreasonable passions, may be reducible as a sin against this commandment, for all acts of cruelty are so. We should be careful not vainly, or superfluously, or unnecessarily, or prodigally, to take away the life of the creatures ; nor should we use their labour excessively, immoderately, or

unseasonably, nor deny them their convenient food. We should abhor those sports that consist in torturing the creatures: And if either noxious creatures are to be destroyed, or creatures for food to be taken, we should do it in that manner that may be with the least torture to the creatures; nor should we destroy those creatures for recreation-sake, that either were not hurtful when they lived, or are not profitable when they are killed; ever remembering that though God has given us a dominion over the creatures, yet it is under the law of justice and moderation.

Every killing of a man is not murder, for there are several cases, wherein though one kill another, yet he is no murderer. As, (1.) In the execution of justice. Magistrates, and such who have a lawful power and authority, may and ought to put capital offenders to death; and if they do not, God will charge it upon them as their sin. "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (*Gen. ix. 6.*) And again, "Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life." (*Deut. xix. 21.*) And our Saviour's command not to resist evil, (*Matt. v. 39.*) only forbids private revenge, and not public. If we have in any thing suffered wrong, we ought to bring all our causes and complaints to the Magistrate, for into his hands hath God put the sword of justice. (*Rom. xiii. 4.*) Revenge is so sacred a thing, that none ought to intermeddle with it, but those whom God has appointed, for he has solemnly ascribed it to himself. "Vengeance belongeth to me, and I will recompense, saith the LORD." (*Heb. x. 30.*) And he hath constituted the Magistrate as his deputy in this work and office, and therefore he only ought to revenge by punishment proportionable to the nature of the crimes committed. So that to speak properly, it is only God and not man, that sheds the blood of wicked persons; for the Magistrate receives his commission from God, and doth it as his Minister and servant.

2. In a just and lawful War against another nation, undertaken either for necessary defence against an unjust invasion, or for recovery of what is unjustly taken away.

or for punishing some great injury or wrong. For where the cause is just, the manner in which we prosecute it is warrantable, the authority which engages us in it being rightly constituted over us, we may, when it is very necessary, lawfully take up arms, and in a public war, right ourselves upon an injurious enemy; for what law is to persons of the same nation, that war is to persons of a different nation. We read that among the penitents that came to JOHN the Baptist for instruction, when soldiers also came, he did not bid them lay down their arms, or their commissions, but gave them directions how they should demean themselves in their calling; which he would not have done, if he had thought their calling itself unlawful. Neither did our Saviour, when he so highly commended the Centurion for his faith, rebuke him for his profession, but extols him for taking the ground and argument of his faith from his military calling. (*Luke* vii. 8, and *John* xviii. 36.) When CHRIST was examined concerning his kingdom, he answers, “My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.” Which greatly implies, that though wars and fightings were not proper means to advance the spiritual nature of the kingdom of CHRIST, yet if the methods of his humiliation had permitted him to assume the royal sceptre, his followers and servants might lawfully have fought to defend his claim and title.

3. In the necessary defence of man’s person, when he is suddenly assaulted by those who attempt to take away his life, and hath no other means left him to secure it. In this case, there being no possibility of having recourse to a Magistrate for protection, every man is a Magistrate to himself, but it is not enough the danger be impending, but it must be instant and present, and no way of escape visible, so that a man’s life is in all probability lost, if he does not stand upon his own defence; for in all dangers that are only threatened and approaching, we ought to trust Providence, and to use our best diligence to work our escape from them. Yea, we find, (*Exod.* xxii. 2,) that God allows the killing

of a thief, if he breaks into a man's house by night : But not so if he attempted it by day. And possibly the reason of this law might be, because when any comes upon another in the night, it might be presumed that he takes the advantage of the darkness not only to steal his goods, but to mischief his person. And therefore God allows it as lawful to kill such an one, as a part of necessary defence. From which I think we may safely conclude, that it is lawful also to kill those who attempt on our goods, when we have reason to fear they may likewise design on our persons.

4. In accidental blood-shedding, when there is no intention or purpose of doing it, as when in hewing of wood, the axe should slip, and by chance kill a man. (*Deut. xix. 5.*) And the like. But here we must look to it, that we be employed about lawful things ; otherwise, if we be doing that which is unjustifiable, which accidentally proves to be the death of another, this cannot be excused from murder. There ought also to be a due care taken to avoid any mischief that may happen upon doing of a lawful action, by giving notice to those who come in the way of danger, and forbearing to do it whilst they are there. But in all cases where the death of another is intended, let it be upon never such violent and sudden passion, though there were no propensed malice borne them before, it is in conscience and in the sight of God, wilful murder.

Duties required. 1. In respect of the affections.

(1.) We are to have a sincere kindness for all men, to wish all good to others in respect of their souls and bodies ; to be earnestly desirous that all men may arrive at that holiness here, which may make them capable of eternal happiness hereafter ; and in regard to their bodies, we are to have the same tenderness for them as for our own, and whatsoever we apprehend as grievous to ourselves, we must be unwilling should befall another. This love will secure the mind not only from envy, malice, censoriousness, and rash judging, which have been already mentioned ; but also from pride and haughtiness, dissembling ; and this is the love we are commanded to have, such as is without

dissimulation, (*Rom* xii. 9,) and from mercenariness and self-seeking. This charity must be extended to our greatest enemies, and if it be sincere, will produce in us, (2.) Meekness, that is, a patience and gentleness towards all, in spite of all provocation to the contrary. (3.) Compassion towards all the misery of others, and joy in their prosperity.

2. In respect of the actions. This charity must be expressed in actions. (1.) By humanity and courtesy of behaviour towards all. There is so much respect due to the very nature of mankind, that no accidental advantage of wealth or honour which one man hath above another, can acquit him from that debt to it, even in the person of the meanest. (2.) By endeavouring the comfort and refreshment of others, to give them all true cause of joy and cheerfulness, especially when we see any under sadness or heaviness, then to labour by all Christian means to cheer their troubled spirits. (3.) By a hearty zeal to save the life of eternal souls. We should propound to ourselves in all our converse with others, that those who have such abilities and opportunities as may make it likely to do good, should use them for instructing the ignorant, reprehending and admonishing the sinner, confirming and encouraging the weak. Every spiritual want of another should give us occasion of exercising some charity. Or if by reason of our meanness, unacquaintedness, or other circumstances, we shall, upon sober judging, think it vain to attempt any thing ourselves, we should endeavour to find out some other instrument, by whom it may be successfully done. And if, after all our endeavours, the obstinacy of men do not suffer themselves to reap any fruit from them, yet we should continue to exhort by good example, and cease not to importune God for them, that he will draw them to himself. (4.) By a hearty zeal to procure, promote, and preserve their temporal health, safety, liberty, happiness, and lives; that they may be better able to serve and love God. We are to compassionate their pains and miseries, but also to do what

we can for their ease and relief. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, harbour the stranger, visit the sick and imprisoned, and endeavour the enlargement of the latter in cases where it is prudent. We are to defend the lives of others, in all these instances wherein self-defence is lawful, to relieve the oppressed, and in general to lay hold of all occasions of doing good offices to the bodies of our neighbours. We may sometimes find a wounded man, with the Samaritan, and then it is our duty to do as he did; or we may find an innocent person condemned to death, as SUSANNAH was, and then we are, with DANIEL, to use all possible means for their deliverance.

VII. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

1. ADULTERY, properly taken, is a sin, committed between persons, the one, or both of them, married unto another. It is a most heinous sin, but on the married person's side most inexcusable and intolerable. It is called a great wickedness against God, even on the unmarried person's part. (Gen. xxxix. 9.) And the temporal punishment assigned to it is no less than death; the same punishment that belonged to murder, and greater than was inflicted for theft. (Lev. xx. 10, Deut. xxii. 22.) And though such persons may escape the judgment of men, either through the secrecy of their wickedness, or the too gentle censures of the law; yet they shall not escape the righteous judgment of God, nor those everlasting punishments that he hath prepared for them in hell. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. xiii. 4.)—There are two things that make adultery so exceeding heinous. The luxury and incontinency of it, in letting loose the reins to a brutish concupiscence, and yielding up the body to pollution and the soul to damnation. The injustice of it, being a deceit of the highest and most injurious nature; for it is a violation of a most solemn vow and covenant, and so adds perjury to unfaithfulness; and it is the source and

cause of a spurious birth, bringing in a strange blood into the inheritance of lawful children, whereby this unfaithfulness becomes theft, as well as perjury.

But though adultery be alone mentioned in the command ; yet according to the general rules laid down in the beginning, all other kinds of uncleanness are forbidden under the name of this one gross crime. For the law of God is perfect, and as all manner of chastity both in our thoughts, words, and actions, is there enjoined us ; so likewise whatsoever is in the least contrary, and prejudicial to a spotless chastity, and inviolate modesty, is hereby forbidden. And therefore,

2. This command forbids fornication ; which properly is the sin of uncleanness committed between two single persons. And though it hath not some aggravations that belong to the other, yet it is an abominable sin in the sight of God. “Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, shall ever inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 *Cor.* vi. 9.) And in *Rev.* xiv. 8, xxii. 15, you may see, that fornicators are strung up with the vilest, and most infamous sinners. The Apostle reckons up this as one of the works of the flesh, (*Gal.* v. 19,) and exhorts us to a careful mortification of it. (*Col.* iii. 5.)

3. This command forbids all voluntary pollutions of either sex : All immoderate use of the marriage-bed, and all unseasonable use of it ; for there are seasons when God and nature separate the man and wife, in this respect ; and in any of these times, it is forbidden the husband to converse with the wife ; as you may see, *Lev.* xv. 9.

Immodest behaviour between husband and wife, such as incites themselves, by mutual dalliances for pleasure’s sake, and awakening the sleeping passions which nature had laid to rest, is another abuse of marriage licence, and forbidden in this command.

4. Here likewise are forbidden all unnatural lusts, and incestuous mixtures, or uncleanness between those who are related to each other, within the degrees of kindred specified, *Lev.* xviii. ; whether the kindred be by affinity or con-

sanguinity. And the nearer any persons are so related to us, the greater the abomination if we approach unto them ; whether it be with pretence of marriage, which in this case is null and void, or without any such pretence.

5. Polygamy is forbidden. And though God seemed to connive at this sin in the holy men of old ; yet was it unlawful from the beginning, even then, when the necessity of increasing the world might seem to plead for it. And therefore the Prophet MALACHI (*Chap. ii. 15*) refers us to the primitive institution of marriage to show the obliquity of this practice. And the Apostle hath commanded, “ Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.” (*1 Cor. vii. 2.*)

6. All these things that may be incentives to lust, and add fuel to this fire, are likewise forbidden in this command ; all impurities of the eyes, of contact, of lewd and obscene speech ; all immodest spectacles, wanton actions, impure company, songs, books, and pictures ; all lascivious dresses, dances, and plays ; all idleness and luxurious diet, and whatsoever else may kindle, either in ourselves or others, any unchaste affections.

7. Because the law is spiritual, therefore it not only forbids the gross outward acts of filthiness, but the inward uncleanness of heart ; all unlawful contemplations and ideas, and evil concupiscences. For it is not enough to refrain unchaste desires from breaking forth into act ; but we must also refrain our hearts from entertaining any such desires. (*Matt. v. 27, 28.*)

VIII. *Thou shalt not steal.*

THIS command requires honesty and uprightness in our dealings. A virtue immediately founded upon that first practical principle, “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.” (*Matt. vii. 12.*) Both God and nature have set up this standard in our consciences : And usually there needs no other judge of our actions towards others, than by comparing them with what

in the like cases we would think just to be done towards ourselves. It may be, we are all partial to ourselves; and whilst we look only that way, we may possibly seek all advantages, though to another's detriment. But both reason and religion teach us to put ourselves in their stead, and then to manage all our transactions with them, as we ourselves would judge just and reasonable, were their condition ours: And therefore when you deal with another, you should first be both parties to yourself. As for instance, a servant should consider with himself, what respect he would require were he in the same circumstances with his master. Children should consider, what duty and obedience they would expect were they parents of children: Subjects, what honour and submission they might demand were they Magistrates; and so in any other relation. And when they have thus seriously pondered it in their own thoughts, let them perform the same duties to others: For it is a never-failing rule for the direction of our practice, that what thou judgest due to thyself, were thou in another man's condition, is certainly as due to him in his own; and if thou actest not accordingly, thou betrayest a great deal of selfishness and sinful partiality. This is a rule applicable to all affairs; and there is scarce one occurrence of a man's life, but he may regulate himself in it according to this direction: And indeed there is scarce need of any other. Whatsoever thou hast to transact with thy brother, though perhaps one may spy advantages upon him, and such, as if thou shouldest take, possibly he might never know, or be able to redress; yet take thy conscience aside, and seriously ask, Whether thou couldest be content to be so dealt with thyself; and if not, whatsoever the temptation be, or how much soever thou mightest gain by hearkening to it, reject it with scorn, as that which would induce thee to violate the first principle of common honesty. Therefore let me once again recommend it to you, (for indeed I cannot press it too often,) that you would frequently set this golden rule before your eyes, to do nothing to any other person, which, were you in his capacity, and would think

unjust to be done to yourselves, and whatsoever you would expect from others as your due, were you in their place, and they in yours, to perform the very same to them: For otherwise you cannot but condemn yourselves in your actions, whilst you do that which, upon this supposition, you cannot but be convinced is unjust, and which yourselves would expect should be yielded you by others. This is a dictate of nature and right reason; this is the sum of the law and the Prophets; and all these various precepts which are given us in the Scripture for the conduct of our lives, are but as so many lines that meet all in this centre; and if we apply it to each particular command of the second table, we shall find them all founded upon this, and to be interpreted by it. We are required to honour superiors, to abstain from murder, from adultery, from theft, from false accusations, from coveting what rightfully belongs to another; and all this according to the same measure, that we would have others to perform these duties to us. So that self, which is now the great tempter to wrong others, were it governed according to this universal maxim, would be the greatest defender of other men's rights. The most visible violation of this natural law is, by the sin of theft, forbidden in this commandment.

Theft is an unjust taking or keeping to ourselves what is lawfully another man's. He is a thief who withholds what ought to be in his neighbour's possession, as well as he who takes from him what he hath formerly possessed.

All theft pre-supposes a right: For where nothing doth of right pertain to me, nothing can be unjustly taken or detained from me.

Now here, 1. Certain it is that God is the great Lord and Proprietor both of heaven and earth, and of all things in them. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (*Psalms* xxiv. 1.) And, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." (*Psalms* l. 10.) "By him, and of him are all things; and for his will and pleasure, they are and were created."

2. This great and absolute Lord hath granted to man a

large charter of the world ; and when he had taken an exact inventory of those goods, with which he had furnished this great house, the universe, then he set a man to live in it as his tenant, and freely gave him the use of, and dominion over, all the works of his hands. “ Replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over all the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth.” (*Gen.* i. 28.) So the Psalmist, “ The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s ; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” (*Psalms* cxv. 16.) A large and regal gift, whereby he hath made over all sublunary things to men, reserving to himself the sovereignty and supreme Lordship of all, and requiring only from man the homage and payment of obedience. Yet,

3. This large charter gave no particular property to any ; neither if man had continued in this happy and innocent estate, would there have been any need of *meum* or *tuum*, or any partition of these earthly possessions, but the common blessings had been enjoyed in common ; and all things which covetousness and corruption now ravin after, would have been as promiscuously enjoyed and used as the common light and air, and each particular man’s share in those blessings would have been sufficient and satisfactory. But,

(4.) Sin entering into the world, their desires grew immoderate after these earthly enjoyments, and their attempts to attain them injurious to others ; so that it became necessary to prescribe bounds to them, and to divide among them what before lay in common among all ; that each man knowing his assigned portion, might rest satisfied with it, and be restrained from the unjust invasion of another’s right. And,

Lastly. This could no otherwise be effected but by human laws, by mutual compact and agreement, declaring what should be accounted every man’s right : So that it is the law which is the great determiner of property ; and there is nothing mine or thine farther than this assigns it to us. Indeed equity must sometimes interpose to moderate the

letter of the law ; for, in some cases, should we rigorously prosecute our right, and insist upon every punctilio that we may call our due ; this, although it would not be unjust, yet it would be justice turned into gall and wormwood ; it would be a breach and violation of the law of CHRIST and of charity, which requires us rather to part with our own, in small matters, than to be vexatious or contentious in recovering or defending it.

Thus you see how all right and property first came into the world. A general right by the donation of God, a particular right by the sanction of laws, allotting to each man his portion, which to invade or usurp is injustice or theft.

Whence it follows, that where there is no society in occupation of any part of the earth, the right accrues to the first possessor ; and where things are found which appertain to none, they fall to the first seizer ; for there can be no theft committed where there is no precedent title. If any therefore should providentially be cast into some uninhabited part of the world, that general charter which God hath given to mankind of possessing the earth, empowers them to seize it as their's ; and they may lawfully make use of the blessings of it in common, till by mutual consent they divide to each their portion ; but after such a partition made, to use the same liberty is no longer lawful, but theft and robbery.

Thus you see what theft is ; and that this law of God, prohibiting us to steal what is another's, doth pre-suppose a law of man, which makes property, and causeth things to become either our's or another's.

Now, there are many kinds of thefts.

1. The highest is that which is committed against God, by sacrilege. Now sacrilege is an alienating from God whatsoever he has appropriated to himself, or dedicated to his honour and service. Indeed, the alienating of what hath been given to superstitious or idolatrous uses, cannot be justly branded with this black mark of sacrilege ; for it was not so much given to God, as to ignorance and superstition : And therefore our ancestors have done well in

dissolving those nests and cages of unclean birds, that were so numerous and burdensome in these kingdoms; but withal, in my judgment, would have done much better if they had converted their revenues to some public use, either for the benefit of the Church or commonwealth, rather than to their own private gain. But where any thing is indeed consecrated to God, and set apart for his worship and service, it is no less than sacrilege to alienate any part of this to secular uses, or to detain it from that use. And of this God himself grievously complains, "Will a man rob God?" (*Mal.* iii. 8, 9.) As if it were a sin so heinous that it is hardly to be supposed any man would be guilty of it. What! Not to allow that God his share among them who had liberally afforded them all things to enjoy! "Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Certainly those things which are appointed for the worship and service of God, whether they be originally by Divine right or not, yet they cannot be alienated or detained without involving the persons, or the nation, that doth thus, in a most direful curse: For this is no other than robbing God of his right. And how far these nations may be concerned in this sin, and how deeply sunk under this curse, I leave to the consideration of those who have no other interest to sway their judgments, but that of piety and honesty.

2. Theft is committed against men by an unjust seizing or detaining what of right belongs to them; and this may be done either by fraud or force. And therefore our SAVIOUR, in reciting the commandments, mentions them both, "Do not steal, defraud not." (*Mark* x. 19.) This is a sin that God hath threatened with many severe curses.

One kind of theft is oppression and unreasonable exaction; and this especially is the sin of superiors towards their inferiors, taking advantage either of their weakness or their necessity, to impose unequal conditions upon them, and such as they cannot bear without their detriment or ruin, contrary to that law which God gave his people,

“If thou sell aught unto thy neighbour, or buyest aught at thy neighbour’s hands, ye shall not oppress one another.” (*Levit. xxv. 14.*) Thus those who sell their lands to others at too hard a rate, so that the laborious tenant cannot subsist by his industry; those that let out money at a biting interest, or rigidly exact it from insufficient persons; great ones who fright the meaner into disadvantageous bargains, and force them, through fear, to part with what they enjoy at an under price; these, and other like, though they may not be condemned by human laws, which give too much permission to men to make the utmost advantage of their own, yet they are guilty by the law of God, and their sin is no less than oppression; which is a sin hateful both to God and man. The prophet Micah calls it, “a plucking off their skin from them, and their flesh from off their bones, and chopping them in pieces as for the pot, and flesh as for the cauldron.” (*Chap. iii. 2, 3.*) All unmercifulness and hard dealings with others is a kind of theft; for the law of nature, and much more the law of charity, binds thee so to deal with others, that they may have no cause to complain of thee to God, and in the bitterness of their spirit to imprecate his wrath and vengeance upon thee.

Another kind of theft is detaining from another what is his due, either by equity or compact: And how many are there whose luxury is maintained upon the intrusted goods of others, whilst the poor creditor hath no other satisfaction but good words, and scarce any thing to live upon but his own tears and sighs! And how many withhold the hire of the labourer, who, when he hath wearied himself out in their service, is denied that small reward which he requires for his necessary refreshment? Yea, not only denying it, but even deferring it beyond the time, is a kind of theft and oppression. “Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy; at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it: for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.” (*Deut. xxiv. 14.*) Yea, in all thy bargains and agreements, though they be never

so much to thine own prejudice, thou art bound to stand to them, unless the other will voluntarily release thee from the obligation. For this is one of the characters given of a godly person, "He that sweareth, and covenanteth to his own hurt, and changeth not," (*Psalms* xv. 4,) but upon demand is ready and willing to fulfil his agreement. How much more heinous and abominable is it, when they have already received the full value of their compact, unjustly to withhold what they have agreed to give; which is no better than to take their labour or their goods from them by violence and robbery; yea, and in one respect worse, in as much as it adds falsehood to stealth.

Another kind of theft is in buying and selling; and this is a very large and voluminous deceit: For the subtlety of men have found out so many artifices to defraud one another, that to recount them is almost as hard as to escape them. Here come in the false weights and the false measures, which are an abomination to the LORD. (*Prov.* xi. 1.) False and counterfeited wares, over-commending or undervaluing of goods, for advantage, and many other unjust contrivances, which men's consciences can better suggest to them than any discourse. The Apostle hath sufficiently cautioned and threatened such men: "Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because that the LORD is the avenger of such." (*1 Thess.* iv. 6.) Believe it, there is a day coming, when the false weights shall be themselves weighed, and the scanty measures measured by a standard that is infallibly true. Possibly thou mayest deal so cunningly that those whom thou over-reachest can have no advantage against thee, nor right themselves by law; but remember that the great Judge will avenge them upon thee at the last day. Then all accounts shall be balanced, and so much found resting due, which thou shalt certainly pay, though not to those whom thou hast wronged, yet to the justice of God, who is the great and universal creditor.

There are many other kinds of thefts, as prodigality in wasting what should satisfy the just demands of others,

taking of wages and rewards for what we do not endeavour conscientiously to perform, selling that which we have no right to dispose of, or things which ought not to be sold, taking bribes for injustice, or rewards for injustice. But I shall not particularly insist upon these, and many others that might be mentioned.

And thus we have seen what the negative part of this precept is.

But because every negative implies in it a positive, let us see what is the duty required from us; and that is two-fold.

1. That every one of us should have some calling.

2. That all of us should be contented in that condition of life, wherein the Divine Providence hath set us.

“Thou shalt not steal:” Therefore every man ought to have a calling, whereon he may comfortably subsist, and by his labour and industry provide at least necessities for himself and family; for he that provideth not for his family, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Some there are who live without any calling at all. Such are like idle drones, and consume the labours of others, lazy vagabonds, to whom the greatest charity would be correction; who only serve to devour misplaced alms, and defraud the truly poor of their relief; yea, if I would rank with these, a company of superfluous, debauched gentlemen, I think I should do them no great injury; such, I mean, who are neither serviceable to God nor their country, who have nothing of true worth and gentility in them, but are the most unprofitable members in the commonwealth, and good for nothing but to kill and destroy one another. I know there is no necessity for manual labour to those whom God hath liberally endowed with earthly blessings; but yet they may have a calling, and within their own sphere may find employment enough to take up their time and thoughts, and such as may make them the most beneficial men on earth, and truly honoured and loved by others; for by their authority, their example, the ampleness of their revenues, and the dependance that others have upon them, they may be as influential to promote goodness and virtue, as too

commonly they are to promote vice and villainy ; but yet withal, if they should condescend to some stated vocation, it would be no disparagement to their gentility ; for certainly ADAM was as much a gentleman and had as large demesnes as any of them, and yet God thought fit to place him in Eden, that he might dress and keep the garden.

But as some have no employment, so others have an unlawful employment : Such whose only work is to instruct vice and incite men to it. And how many such are there who live by encouraging the wickedness of others, and continually make use of all the allurements that might entice to evil, and recommend debauchery, first to the fancy, and then to the will and affections !

Others have indeed an honest and a lawful calling, but they are negligent and slothful in it. Now sloth tendeth to poverty : “ Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,” (*Prov.* vi. 10,) drawing nearer and nearer to thee by soft and silent degrees ; “ and thy want as an armed man,” who though his pace be slow, by reason of the weight of his armour, yet his assaults are more irresistible and destructive. And poverty tempts to theft : “ Lest I am poor and steal ;” (*Prov.* xxx. 9;) and therefore this command, which forbids theft, must, by consequence, enjoin labour and industry in those lawful callings wherein the Divine Providence hath set us ; according to that of the Apostle, “ Let him that stole steal no more ; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth ;” (*Eph.* iv. 28;) and so, by his industry, of a thief become a benefactor and an alms-giver.

2. It requires us to be contented with that portion of earthly comforts which our heavenly FATHER allots to us : “ Be content with those things ye have.” (*Heb.* xiii. 5.) And certainly he that is not content with what God allows him, lies under a grievous temptation, by unjust courses, to carve out his own condition, and to invade the properties of others. Let us, therefore, check this ripening temper

betimes, and not think that we have too little, and others too much ; but whatsoever God affords us, let us account it sufficient provision and a child's portion ; and although it be but food and raiment, neither the most delicate nor the most sumptuous, yet "having food and raiment, let us therewith be content," as the Apostle exhorts us. (1 *Tim.* vi. 8.) Let us look upon all other things as superfluous or indifferent, and not murmur, although we should never obtain them ; for whatsoever is needful to thy subsistence, God's providence and blessing upon thy industry will furnish thee with it ; and what is not needful to this is not worth thy envy and repining.

And so much for the exposition of this commandment.

I shall only subjoin a word or two to those who are conscious to themselves that they have wronged others of what was their due, and either withheld, or taken from them, what by law and equity belonged to them. Let such know that they are bound to make them a perfect satisfaction, by making an entire restitution, if the thing they have stolen be still extant, and in their hand ; or if not, then by making a full and satisfactory compensation. Yes, be the thing great or small, more or less, though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy credit, by acknowledging such a wrong, or visibly tend to thy impoverishing or undoing to restore it, yet, notwithstanding, thou art bound to restore every farthing of what thou hast wronged and defrauded thy brother. Nor is it enough to confess the sin before God, and to beg pardon at his hands, but thou must likewise render to man what is his due, and what thou unjustly keepest from him ; whether it be his by thy promise, or by his own former possession, as ever thou hopest to obtain pardon for thy sin from the mercy of God ; yea, and thou art bound likewise to the very utmost of thy power to make him recompense for all the damage which he hath in the meantime sustained by thy unjust withholding his right from him, or else thou shalt never obtain pardon ; and the reason is, because as long as you detain what is another's, so long you continue in the commission of the same sin ;

for unjust possession is a continued theft, and certainly repentance can never be true while we continue in the sin of which we seem to repent, and thy repentance not being true, pardon shall never be granted thee.

But you will say, ‘What if those whom we have wronged be since dead, how can restitution be made unto them?’

I answer, in this case thou art bound to make it to their children or their near relations, to whom it is to be supposed what thou hast wrongfully detained would have descended. Or if none of these can be found, nor any to whom of right it may belong, then God’s right takes place, as He is the great Lord and Proprietor of all things: And thou oughtest, besides, what thou art obliged, to give of thine own, and bestow it on the works of charity and piety; yet withal, thou hast great reason to bewail that thou hast so long deferred the restitution of it to the right owner, till now thou hast made thyself incapable of doing it.

This possibly may seem a hard lesson, and doubtless it is so in a world so full of rapine and injustice; but yet, as hard as it is, this is the rule of Christianity, this is the inflexible law of justice; and without this, you live and die without all hope of obtaining pardon by continuing in your sins impenitently.

IX. *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

The former commandment provided for the security of every man’s property, this provides for the preservation of his good name, and it forbids,

1. The sin of lying.
2. Detraction and slander.
3. Soothing and flattery.

1. This command prohibits lying; a sin that comprehends under it all other violations of this precept; for slander and flattery are both of them lies, different only in circumstance.

I shall first show you what a lie is ; and then the heinousness and aggravation of this common sin.

1. A lie, according to ST. AUSTIN's definition of it, is a voluntary speaking of an untruth, with an intent to deceive. And therefore in a lie there must be these three ingredients :

1. There must be the speaking of an untruth.
2. It must be known to us to be untruth. And
3. It must be with a will and intent to deceive him to whom we speak. And therefore,

1. Parables and figurative speeches, are no lies : For neither as to the drift and scope of them are they falsehoods ; nor yet are they spoken with an intent to deceive, but rather to instruct the hearers.

2. Every falsehood is not a lie ; for many times men speak that which is not true, which yet they believe to be true, and so are rather deceived than deceivers : And perhaps are far from any intention of imposing upon the credulity of others.

3. A man may act contrary to what he before said, if the circumstance of the thing be altered, without being guilty of lying. We have frequent examples of this in the Scripture. Thus, (*Gen. xix. 2,*) the angels tell Lot, that they would not come into his house, but would abide in the street all night ; yet upon his importunity and earnest intreaties they went in with him. And thus ST. PETER, with some heat, refused that CHRIST should wash his feet, "Thou shalt never wash my feet ;" (*John xiii. 8;*) but when he was instructed in the significancy of this condescension of our Saviour, not only permits, but intreats him to do it. So likewise in all things of such a nature, we may lawfully change our words upon the change of our minds ; and upon the inducement of some circumstances that were not known or considered by us, we may, without the imputation of lying, do otherwise than we before declared.

And thus you see what a lie is, and what is not a lie : The sum of all I shall contract into this description of it. A lie is a falsehood, either real, or supposed so by us,

spoken purposely, and with an intention to deceive another. And therefore neither falsehoods, nor figurative speeches, nor the change of our mind upon the changing of circumstances, can be chargeable with that foul and scandalous sin of lying.

Now lies are usually distinguished into three kinds; the jocular, officious, and pernicious lie.

1. There is a jocular lie; a lie framed to excite mirth and laughter, and deceive the hearer, only to please and divert him. This, though it may seem very harmless, yet truth is such an awful thing, that it ought not to be contradicted; no, not in jest: And God reckons it up as a sin against the Israelites, that “they made the King and Princes glad, or merry, with their lies.” (*Hosea* vii. 3.)

2. There is an officious lie, which is told for another’s advantage, and seems to make compensation for its falsehood by its use and profit: But yet neither can this excuse it from being a sin; for since a lie is evil in itself, let the advantage that accrues by it be never so great, we ought not to shelter either ourselves, or others, under that rotten refuge. That stated maxim holds universally true in all cases, “We ought not to do evil, that good may come thereof.” And therefore, although thine own life, or thy neighbour’s, depends upon it; yea, put the case it were not only to save his life, but to save his soul, couldest thou by this means most eminently advance the glory of God, or the general good of the Church, yet thou oughtest not to tell the least lie to promote these great and blessed ends.

3. There is a pernicious lie, a lie devised on purpose for the hurt of my neighbour, which is the first and the most heinous sort of all. It shows a heart full of malice, when this passion works out at the mouth in slanderous reports and false accusations. All lies are in themselves sinful, but this the vilest and most abominable of all.

There remain two other violations of this Commandment; the one by slander and detraction, the other by flattery. I shall speak first of that common sin of slander and detraction, a sin that is triumphant in our age, and if I

should likewise say in this place, I think I should not myself be guilty of it by that censure. Indeed slander and detraction seem somewhat to differ: For slander properly is a false imputation of vice; but detraction is a causeless, diminishing report of virtue. The one traduceth us to be what we are not, the other lessens what we really are; and both are highly injurious to our good name and reputation.

When a man's life and actions are so blameless that even malice itself is ashamed to vend its venom by base slanders, lest it should appear to be malice, and the reproach light upon the reporters, then it betakes itself to those little arts of nibbling at the edges of a man's credit, and clipping away the borders of his good name. Thus when any are so just as to give others their due commendation, either for learning, or wisdom, or piety, or any other perfection, either of grace or nature, you shall have those who lie in wait to cut other men's esteem, and if they see it so strongly fortified by the conspicuousness of it, and the general vote of the world, that they dare not attack the whole, then they lurkingly assault part of it; and what they cannot altogether deny, they will endeavour to diminish: 'It is true, such a man is, as you say, learned and knowing; but withal so knowing as to know that too. He is wise, but his wisdom is rather politic than generous; and his designs are biassed with self-ends. He is charitable, but his charity seems too indiscreet; or if you did not proclaim his good works, he himself would. He is pious and devout indeed, poor man, after his way, and according to his knowledge.' Thus by these blind hints they endeavour either to find, or to make a flaw in another man's repute.

Now slandering may be either in judicial process, or in common and ordinary converse.

1. In judicial process, and then it is truly and properly false witnessing; when thou risest up against thy brother in judgment, and attestest that which thou knowest to be false, or which thou art not infallibly assured to be true; and this sin is the more heinous and dreadful upon the account of two aggravating circumstances that attend it.

(1.) Since usually all actions in law and judgment, concern either the person or the estate of thy brother, by a false witness, thou not only wrongest him in his name and reputation, but in one of these, and so art not only a slanderer, but a thief or murderer: “A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour.” (*Prov.* xi. 9.) And by so much the more odious is thy crime in that thou pervertest the law, which was intended to be a fence to every man’s property, and turnest it against itself, making it the instrument of injustice and cruelty.

(2.) Since usually all judicial proceedings exact from the witnesses a tremendous oath, solemnly taken by the name of the great God of heaven, to give in a false testimony is not only to be guilty of slander, but of perjury too: Yea, and let me add one thing more to make it a most accumulated wickedness: Such a false testimony is not only slander and perjury, but it is blasphemy too: For what else is it but to bring the most holy God, who is eternal truth, to confirm a falsehood, and a lie? What can be a higher affront to his most sacred Majesty than this? For a sworn witness is therefore accepted, because he brings God to be a witness; and wilt not thou tremble, O wretch, to cite God to appear a witness to that which a thousand witnesses within thee (I mean thy own conscience) do all depose to be false, and so to transfer thy injustice, and rapine, and bloody murder upon him, and shelter them all under the shadow of his veracity and faithfulness?

2. There is a slandering of others in our ordinary converse. And this is done two ways, either,

(1.) Openly and avowedly, in their presence, and to their faces: And that is also two-fold.

Either by reviling and railing speeches. And thus SHIMEI barked at DAVID, “Come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial.” (2 *Sam.* xvi. 7.) And I wish that our streets and houses did not, to their great disgrace, echo with such clamours; wheresoever it be found it is a disparagement to human nature, a sin against civil society, and argues men guilty of much folly and brutishness; and

I am sure is it a transgression of that express command of the Apostle, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD, for CHRIST's sake, hath forgiven you." (*Eph. iv. 31, 32.*)

There is another way of open and avowed slander, and that is by bitter taunts and sarcastic scoffs: And this is usually an applauded sin among the more refined sort of men, who take a pride in exposing others and making them ridiculous, thinking their own wit never looks so beautiful as when it is dyed in others' blushes. But this is a most scurrilous and offensive way, wherein certainly he hath the most advantage, not who hath most wit, but least modesty. These kinds of tauntings are sometimes such as the Apostle calls cruel mockings, and reckons them up as one part of those persecutions the primitive Christians endured. (*Heb. xi. 36.*)

(3.) There is a more secret conveyance of slander, and that is by backbiting, whispering, and carrying up and down of tales, like those busy tongues, that would fain find, or make themselves some employment, saying, "Report, and we will report, (*Jer. xx. 10;*) and so false and slanderous humour shall, like the river Nile, spread over the whole land, and yet the head of it be never known; it shall pass on to the indelible blot and infamy of thy neighbour, and the first author of it lies hidden and concealed in the crowd. Against this sort of men SOLOMON, in his book of Proverbs, is very severe; and there is no one wickedness which that excellent compendium of wisdom and morality doth more inveigh against than this of whispering: "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, they go down into the inmost parts of the belly;" (*Prov. xviii. 8;*) intimating that the wound such a tongue makes is deep, but hid and secret, and therefore the more incurable. And, "A whisperer separates chief friends." (*Prov. xvi. 28.*) He is, as it were, the Devil's interpreter between them both, and goes to one, and buzzeth in his ear what such an one said of him,

although perhaps it be altogether false, and when he hath by this means got some angry speeches from him, goes and reports them back to the other, and so by his wicked breath blows up the coals of strife and dissensions between them. And therefore the wise man tells us, “Where no wood is the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth.” (*Prov.* xxvi. 20.) The Apostle cautions the Corinthians against this sin: “I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would; lest there be among you debates, envyings, strife, back-bitings, whisperings, tumults;” (*2 Cor.* xii. 20;) and he reckons it up among the black catalogue of those crimes, for the which “God gave up the heathen to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, spiteful, inventors of evil things.” (*Rom.* i. 29, 30.) Now one of the chief artifices of this sort of men is to calumniate strenuously, according to that old maxim of the Devil, ‘Slander stoutly, and somewhat will stick:’ For though the wound may possibly be healed, yet the scar will remain, and be a blemish to a man’s reputation as long as he lives.

There is another kind of detraction, and that is when a man divulgeth those imperfections and faults which are truly in his neighbour, without being called or necessitated to do it: For sometimes truth itself is detraction, when it is spoken with an evil design, to the prejudice of another. Indeed, if thou be duly called to witness in judgment, or if the crime be such as ought not to escape unpunished, or if he remain contumacious after more private admonition, in which case our SAVIOUR commands us to tell the Church; or, lastly, when it is for the safety and security of another, who might else be wronged, should we conceal from him the mischiefs which others intend him, in these cases it is both lawful and expedient to make known the faults of thy brother. But then be sure that thou do it not with any secret delight, but with that true sorrow of heart, that may evince to all the world, that nothing but conscience and a sense of

thy duty, enforced thee to publish his shame, which thou shouldest be willing to hide at the price of any thing but sin and thine own shame. • But, alas ! it is strange to consider how we delight in other men's sins, and are secretly glad when their miscarriages give us an occasion to disgrace them. How many are big with such stuff, and go in pain till they have disburdened themselves into the ears of others ! And some are such ill dissemblers of their joy, that they do it with open scorn and derision. Others are more artificially malicious, and with a deep sigh, and a downcast look, and a whining voice, and an affected slowness, whisper to one, ' Alas ! did you not hear of such a miscarriage by such an one ? ' And then whisper the same thing to another, and a third ; and when they have made it as public as they can, hypocritically desire every one to keep it secret, for that they would be loath their neighbour should come to any disgrace and trouble about it. Believe it, Sirs, this, though the matter you report be never so true, is mere detraction, because it is done to no good end. And therefore we find that DOEG, though he told nothing but the truth, (1 *Sam.* xxii. 9, 10,) yet he is by DAVID challenged as a liar and slanderer. (*Psalm* lii.)

I shall finish this subject with giving you,

(1.) Some brief rules, which, through the grace of God, may be serviceable to keep you from this common sin. And then,

(2.) Show you how you ought to demean yourselves under the lash of slanderous tongues.

(1.) If thou wouldest keep thyself from being a slanderer of others, addict not thyself violently to any one party or persuasion of men. For part-taking will beget prejudice, and prejudice is the jaundice of the soul, which represents other men and their actions in the colour our own disease puts upon them. And, indeed, we have all generally such a good conceit of ourselves, that it is very hard to have a good esteem for others who are not of our judgment and of our way : And this makes us first very willing to hear some evil of them. For because we think what we

do is good, we cannot cordially think them good who do not judge and act as we do ; and so our minds are prepared to entertain reports against them from others, and then to spread them abroad ourselves. And I cannot but impute to this the great uncharitableness of our days, wherein love and brotherly kindness lie murdered, under the violence of different persuasions and different modes, and divers ways of worshipping one and the same God. Hence all those lying rumours and lying wonders that one party invents to beat down the other : Both suffer from each other's envenomed tongues ; and, between both, truth suffers and charity perisheth. For shame, O Christians ! Is this the way to promote God's cause, or CHRIST's kingdom ? Doth he, or it, stand in need of your lies ? Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him ? Shall his honour be maintained by the Devil's inventions ? I shall not speak partially ; but wheresoever the fault lies, there let this censure fall, that it is a strong presumption of a weak and bad cause, when the refuge and support of it are lies.

(2.) If thou wouldest not be guilty of slander, be not busy in other men's affairs. Keep thine eyes within doors, and thy thoughts at home. Inquire not what others say, nor what others do, but look to thine own affairs and guide them with discretion ; thou hast work enough at home, within thine own heart, and in thine own house ; and if thou art careful to manage that well, thou wilt scarce have either time or inclination to receive or divulge bad reports of others. Be frequent in reflecting upon thine own miscarriages, or thy proneness to fall into the same or greater faults ; when thou hearest or knowest of any sin committed by another, look backwards upon thine own life. Canst thou find no blots in thy copy ? Is the whole course of thy life fair written upon thy conscience ? If not, how canst thou with any modesty upbraid thy brother with his miscarriages, when thou thyself hast been guilty of the like or greater ? Methinks our shame for our own sins should be a covering to our brother's ; and when we

ourselves are guilty, we should not be so foolish as to reproach ourselves by reproaching him ; otherwise to eclipse and darken his good name, is but as when the moon eclipseth the sun, her own darkness and obscurity is made the more remarkable by it.

3. Or if God by his restraining grace hath kept thee from those wickednesses into which he hath suffered others to fall, look inward, view and search thine own heart, thy corrupted nature, yea, and there thou shalt find those, yea, and far greater abominations than those, like beds of twisted serpents, knotting and crawling within thee. Say with thyself, How can I reproach him, who hath but copied forth mine own nature? How can I expose his infamy, who hath but done what I have much ado to keep myself from doing? Possibly the same temptation might have prevailed over me too, had God let it loose upon me. I owe my preservation not to any difference that was between us, but only to the free grace of God : By this it is that I stand, and shall I reproach him for falling, who should also myself have fallen, were I not strongly upheld by another? Thus, I say, by reflecting on ourselves we shall be withheld from being injurious in our censures, and in our reports of others ; we shall hardly divulge their real miscarriages, much less accuse them with false ones.

4. If you would not be guilty of slander, listen not to those who are slanderers and detractors : Lend not your ears to those who go about with tales and whispers, whose idle business it is to tell news of this man and another. For if these kinds of flies can blow in your ears, the worms will certainly creep out at your mouths ; for all discourse is kept up by exchange : And if he bring thee one story, thou wilt think it incivility not to repay him with another for it : And so they chat over the whole neighbourhood, accuse this man, and condemn another, and suspect a third, and speak evil of all. I wish the most of our converse were not taken up this way, in recounting stories of what passed between such and such, when all is to no other end but to bring an evil report upon them. Now, if any such backbiters haunt

thee, who make it their trade to run up and down with tales and news, give them no countenance, listen not to their detractions, but rather sharply rebuke them, and this will either drive the slander from them, or the slanderer from thee. “The North wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.” (*Prov.* xxv. 23.)

5. Be not easy to entertain evil surmises against others. For if thou begin to suspect evil, the next thing is to conclude it, and the next to report it. This suspicion is a strange shadow that every action of another will cast upon our minds; especially if we be beforehand a little disaffected towards them. Thus very dreams increased suspicions against JOSEPH in his brethren: And if once a man be out of esteem with us, let him then do what he will, be it never so virtuous, suspicion will still be the interpreter. And where suspicion is the interpreter of men’s actions, slander and detraction will be the comment upon them. Indeed suspicion is always too hasty in concluding; and many times our jealousies and distrusts, upon very small occasions, prompt us to conclude, that what we have thus surmised is certainly come to pass; and so we report that confidently for truth which we never saw acted, but only in our own fancies.

These are the rules to keep you from being guilty of slander against others.

If any are guilty of raising an ill report against you, observe these following directions, how you ought to demean yourselves in this case.

1. If the reproach they cast upon thee be true and deserved, though they perhaps have sinned in disclosing it to the world, yet make this use of it, go thou and disclose it in thy most humble confessions to God; yea, and if thou art called thereto, give glory to God by confessing it before men. Men possibly may upbraid thee with it, but by this course God will forgive thee without upbraiding thee.

2. If thou art falsely charged with that which never was

in thine heart, yet improve this Providence to stir thee up to pray the more fervently, that God would for ever keep thee from falling into that sin with which others slander thee ; so shall all their reproaches be thrown merely into the air, and fall at last heavy upon their own heads.

3. If any unjustly slander thee, revenge not thyself upon them, by slandering them again. I must confess this is a very hard lesson, and requires almost an angelical perfection to perform it well. We read in the Epistle of St. JUDE, that when MICHAEL and the Devil contended about the body of MOSES, it is said that the holy angel durst not bring a railing accusation against that wicked spirit, but only said, ‘The LORD rebuke thee.’ And so when men of Devilish spirits spew out their slander, and broach all the malicious accusations that their father, the great accuser, hath ever suggested unto them, return not slander for slander, for so the Devil would teach thee to be a Devil ; but with all quietness and meekness, desire of God to rebuke their lies and calumnies, and by all prudent means vindicate thyself, clear up thine integrity, and make it appear that though the archers have shot at thee, and sorely grieved thee with their arrows, even bitter words, yet still thy bow remaineth in its strength. What saith the Apostle ? “Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing.” (1. *Pet.* iii. 9.) And indeed whosoever doth so, seeks only to heal a wound in his name, by making a much deeper one in his conscience.

4. When thou art falsely aspersed, appeal to the all-knowing God : Retire into the peace and refuge of thine own conscience, and there shalt thou find enough for their confutation, and thy comfort. Know that a good name is in the power of every slanderous tongue to blast ; but they cannot corrupt thy conscience to vote with them. Possibly it is only thy grace that offends them ; if so, glory in it : For the reproaches of wicked men are the best testimonials that can be given of a Christian. In a strict and holy conversation there is that contradiction to the profane world, as at once both convinceth and vexeth them, reproves and

provokes them. And if thou dost reproach them by thy life, wonder not if they again reproach thee by their slanders. Be not solicitous how they esteem of thee: It is miserable to live upon the reports and opinions of others; let us not reckon what they say, but what reports our own consciences make; and if a storm of obloquy do at any time patter upon thee, how sweet is it to retire inwards to the calm innocency of our own hearts! There, a thousand witnesses will tell us we have not deserved them. How comfortable is it to remit our cause to God, and to leave our vindication to Him for whose cause we suffer reproach! They may possibly persuade others to believe their calumnies: But God, who searcheth the heart, knows that we are injured; and he is hastening on a day wherein he will clear up our righteousness, and then the testimony of a good conscience shall put ten thousand slanderers to silence.

The third sin against this commandment is flattery, which is quite an opposite extreme to the other.

1. There is a self-flattery. And indeed every man is (as PLUTARCH well observed it) his own greatest flatterer; and however empty and defective we may be, yet we are all apt to love ourselves, perhaps without a rival, and to be puffed up with a vain conceit of our own perfections, to applaud and commend ourselves in our own thoughts, and to think that we excel ourselves in what we have; and what we have not we despise as nothing worth. From this abundance of a vain heart break out boastings, contemning others, a presumptuous intruding into those employments which we are in no way able to manage. Learn therefore, O Christian, to take the just measure of thyself. Rather let it be too scanty than too large; for this will make thee proud, and arrogant, and undertaking; and by exercising thyself in things too high for thee, thou wilt but spoil whatsoever thou rashly ventur'est upon. If thou art at any time called or necessitated to speak of thyself, let it rather be less than the truth, than more: For the tongue is of itself very apt to be lavish when it hath so pleasing a theme as a man's own

praise. Take the advice of SOLOMON, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." (*Prov.* xxvii. 2.)

2. There is a flattering of others; and that either by extolling of their virtues; or, what is worse, by a wicked commendation even of their vices. This is a sin odious to God, who hath threatened to cut off all flattering lips. (*Psalms* xii. 3.) But especially it is most detestable in Ministers, whose very office it is to reprove men for their sins: If they shall daub with untempered mortar; and sew pillows under men's elbows, crying Peace, Peace, when there is no peace, only that they may lull them asleep in their security, they do but betray their souls, and the blood of them God will certainly require at their hands.

X. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's Wife, nor his Man Servant, nor his Maid Servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.*

We are at last arrived to the tenth and last precept of the moral law. The sin here prohibited is concupiscence, or an unlawful lusting after what is another man's. For since God had in the other commandments forbidden the acts of sin against our neighbour, he well knew that the best means to keep them from committing sin in act, would be to keep them from desiring it in heart; and therefore he who is a SPIRIT imposeth a law upon our spirits, and forbids us to covet what before he had forbidden us to perpetrate. It is true, that other precepts are spiritual likewise, and their authority reacheth to the mind, and the most secret thoughts of the heart. For our Saviour (*Matt.* v.) accuseth him of adultery that doth but lust after a woman, and him of murder that is but angry with his brother. And it is a most certain rule, that whatsoever precept prohibits the outward act of any sin, prohibits likewise the inward propension and desire of the soul towards it. But because these are not plainly and literally expressed in the former commands, therefore the infinite wisdom of God thought

fit to add this last command, wherein he doth expressly arraign and condemn the very first motions of our hearts towards any sinful object. And whereas before he had commanded us not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to slander; now in the last place, for the greater security, he commands us not so much as to harbour in our hearts any desire towards these. So that this tenth commandment is the bond that strengthens and confirms the second table. For because all inward actions take their first rise from our inward motions and concupiscence, there is no such way to provide for our innocency as to lay a restraint upon these.

Evil concupiscence or desire is the first-born of original sin, the first expression of that corruption which hath seized on us, and on all the wretched posterity of ADAM. For in original sin, besides the guilt which results from the imputation of the primitive transgression to us, there is likewise an universal depravation of our natures, consisting in two things.

1. In a loss of those spiritual perfections wherewith man was endowed in his creation. And this is the defacing of the image of GOD, which was stamped upon our nature in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; and as a consequent upon this,

2. In a violent propension and inclination to whatsoever is really evil, and contrary to the holy will and commands of GOD. And this is the image of the Devil, into which man, by his voluntary apostasy, hath transformed himself. Now this inclination to what is evil is properly the concupiscence forbidden in this commandment. For the soul of man, being an active and busy creature, must still be putting forth itself in actions suitable to its nature. But before the fall, man enjoyed supernatural grace, though in a natural way, which enabled him to point every motion of his soul towards GOD: But forfeiting this grace by the fall, all his actions now, instead of aspiring to GOD, pitch only upon the creature. And this becomes sin unto us, not merely because we desire created good, (for this is lawful,) but because we desire it in an inordinate manner; that is,

without desiring God. And thus the soul not being able without grace and the image of God, to raise its operations to God, pitches upon what it can, namely low, sinful objects, to the neglect and slighting of God, and the great concerns of heaven. And this in the general is that inordinate disposition of the soul which is here called coveting or concupiscence.

There are four degrees of it.

1. There is the first shadow of an evil thought, the imperfect embryo of a sin before it is shaped in us; and these the Scripture calls the imaginations of the thoughts of men's hearts. "God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." (*Gen. vi. 5.*) That is, the very first figment and flushing of our thoughts is evil and corrupt: Indeed some of these are injected by the Devil. Many times he assaults even God's children with horrid and black temptations, and importunately casts into their minds strange thoughts of questioning the very being of God, the truth of the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, and such other blasphemous, hideous, and unshapen monsters, against the very fundamentals of religion, for the truth of which they would willingly sacrifice their very lives, as a testimony to them. These indeed are not their sins, although they are their great troubles and afflictions; for they come only from a principle without them, so long as they are watchful to abhor and resist them, and to cast those fiery darts of the Devil back again in his face. But there are other first motions arising in our hearts towards those sins, which are more pleasant to our sensual inclinations: These, as soon as ever they begin to stir in our breasts, are truly sins, and do in their measure pollute and defile the soul. For the soul of man is like a clear mirror, upon which if you only breathe, you sully it, and leave a dimness upon it; so truly the very first breathings of an evil thought and desire in our souls sully their beauty, and dim their lustre, and render the image of God less conspicuous in them than it was before.

2. A farther degree of this concupiscence is, when these evil motions are entertained in the mind with some measure of delight. When a single object offers itself, there is a kind of inward pleasing, that affects it with delight, and begets a kind of sympathy between them; that as in natural sympathies, a man is taken and delighted with an object before he knows the reason why he is so; so likewise in this sinful sympathy that is between a carnal heart and a sensual object, the heart is taken and delighted with it, before it has time to consider what there is in it that should so move and affect it. At the very sight of a person we many times conceive some more particular respect for him than for a whole crowd of others; so upon the very first glimpse of a sinful thought, there is something in it that commands a particular regard, that unlocks our very souls before we have leisure to examine why.

3. Hereupon follows assent and approbation of the sin in the judgment; blinded, and forcibly carried away by the violence of corrupt affections. The understanding is the great trier of every deliberate action, so that nothing passeth into act which hath not first passed examination there. Whether this or that action is to be done, is the great question canvassed in this court; and all the powers and faculties of the soul wait what sentence will be here pronounced, and accordingly proceed. Now here two things usually appear, and put in their plea against sin, God's law, and God's advocate, conscience. The law condemns, and conscience cites that law: But then the affections step in, and bribe the judge with profit, or pleasure, or honour, and thereby corrupt the judgment to give its vote and assent to sin.

4. When any sinful motion hath thus gotten an allowance and pass from the judgment, then it betakes itself to the will. The judgment, for a decree, approves, and therefore the will must now resolve to commit it: And then the sin is fully perfected and formed within, and there wants nothing but opportunity to bring it forth into act.

And thus you see what this concupiscence is, and the degrees of it; namely the first bubbleings up of evil thoughts in our hearts; our complacency and delight in them, the assent and allowance of our judgment, and the resolution of our wills, each of these are forbidden in this commandment; but if the sin proceeds any farther, it then exceeds the bounds of this commandment, and falls under the prohibition of some of the former.

Thus much concerning evil concupiscence in the general; but here is mention likewise made of several particular objects of it. Thy neighbour's house, his wife, his servants, his cattle, (under which are comprehended all sorts of his possessions,) and all is included under the last clause, "nor any thing that is thy neighbour's:" So that to desire or take from him either his life, or his good name, or his virtue, this is covetousness, as well as a desire to take from him his temporal possessions.

I shall close up all with some practical improvements.

1. Learn here to adore the unlimited sovereignty of the great God. His authority immediately reacheth to the soul and conscience, and lays an obligation upon our very thoughts and desires, which no human laws can do. It is but a folly for men to intermeddle with, or impose laws upon, that of which they can take no cognizance: And therefore our thoughts and desires are free from their censure any farther, than they discover themselves by overt acts. But though they escape the commands and notice of men, yet they cannot escape God. He seeth not as men see, neither judgeth He as men judge; the secrets of all hearts are open and bare before his eyes. He looks through our very souls, and there is not the least hint of a thought, not the least breath of a desire, stirring in us, but it is more distinctly visible to Him than the most opacious bodies are to us. "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of men." (*Psalms* xciv. 11.) And his law, like his knowledge, reacheth the most secret recesses of the soul, searcheth every corner of the heart, judgeth and condemns those callow lusts which men never espy: And if these find harbour and shelter there, it condemns thee

as a transgressor, and guilty of eternal death, how plausible soever thy external demeanour may be. And therefore,

2. Content not thyself with an outward conformity to the law, but labour to approve thine heart in sincerity and purity to God, otherwise thou wastest only the outside of the cup, when within thou art still full of unclean lusts. This was the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, that the law reached only to the outward man; and, although they entertained and cherished wicked desires and evil purposes in their hearts, yet as long as they did not break forth into outward crimes, they were not to be imputed to them. And this ST. PAUL confesseth, that whilst he was trained up in Pharisaical principles, he did not understand the inward motives of lust to be sin. But alas! This is but gilding over a dry and rotten post; which, though it may look beautiful to men, yet when God comes to examine it, will not abide the fiery trial. Thou art as truly a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, in God's sight, as if thou shouldest actually kill, or steal, or wallow in the open acts of uncleanness. Indeed most men herein grossly delude themselves; and if they can but refrain from the outward commission of sin, they very seldom reflect upon their heart-lusts, which like deep ulcers rankle inwardly, and perhaps grow incurable, when all the while they may be skinned over with a fair and inoffensive life. Although the heart boil with malicious, revengeful, lascivious thoughts, yet they usually dispense with these. But deceive not yourselves, God is not mocked, nor can he be imposed upon by external shows; neither will he judge of thee as others do, or as thou thyself dost: I know it is a very difficult thing to convince men of the great evil that there is in sinful thoughts and excuses, and therefore very difficult to persuade them to labour against them. For because they are of a small and minute being, therefore men think they carry in them but small guilt. Every man that hath but a remnant of conscience left him, will beware of gross and notorious crimes, that carry the mark of hell

and damnation visibly stamped upon their foreheads ; such as he, that can without reluctance commit them, must needs own himself the offspring of the Devil. ‘ But for nought, a notion, a desire, a thing next to nothing, this certainly I may please myself withal. By a malicious purpose I wrong no man ; and what so great evil then can there be in this ? ’ It is true, wert thou only to deal with men, whom immaterial things touch not, there were no such great evil in them. But when thou hast likewise to do with an immaterial and spiritual God, before whom thy very thoughts and desires appear as considerable as thy outward actions, then know that these, as slight and thin beings as they are, fall under his censure, and will fall under his revenge hereafter.

Now were this persuasion effectually wrought into the minds of men, were it possible they should indulge themselves as they do, in vain, frothy, unclean, malicious thoughts and desires ? Were it possible they should so closely brood on these cockatrice eggs, which will bring forth nothing but serpents, to sting them to eternal death ? Were it possible they should delight in rolling a sin to and fro in their fancy, and, by imagining it, make the Devil some recompence for not daring to commit it ? Certainly such men are altogether unacquainted with the life and power of true grace, when as those sins which they dare not act, yet they dare with pleasure contemplate, and dally within their imaginations.

Turn therefore your eyes inward ; bewail and strive against that natural concupiscence which lodgeth there ; and never content thyself that thou hast dammed up the streams of thy corruptions from overflowing thy life and actions, till thou hast in some good measure dried up the fountain of it.

3. See here the best and the surest methods to keep us from the outward violation of GOD’s laws, which is to mortify our concupiscence. And therefore the wisdom of God hath set this commandment in the last place, as a fence and guard to all the rest ; “ thou shalt not covet,” and then

certainly thou shalt not kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery, not bear false witness, but be kept pure from all outward defilements of the flesh, when thou art thus cleansed from the inward defilements of the spirit. For, from these it is that all the visible sins of our lives and actions have their supply. And therefore saith our SAVIOUR, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness; blasphemy." (*Matt.* xv. 19.) Observe that he puts evil thoughts in the front, as the leader of all this black regiment; for out of this evil treasure of the heart, men bring forth evil things; and all the fruits of the flesh, the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah, receive their sap and nourishment from this root of bitterness. It ought therefore most deservedly to be the chief care of every Christian to lay the axe to this root, and to purge and heal this fountain that sends forth such corrupt streams, to keep his heart clean from sinful thoughts and affections, and then his life will be clean. And therefore God very pressingly requires this. "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (*Jer.* iv. 14.) And let me add, that unless we make this our chief care, unless we do most solicitously observe this last commandment, all our care in observing the former will be utterly vain; not only in respect of our acceptance and reward with God, but as to any good issue and effect. All other endeavours will be as successful as to attempt the cure of an ulcerous body without purging it, where the corruption will quickly break forth again; or to attempt the emptying a pond that hath many springs still rising up in the bottom of it, which will soon grow as full as ever it was.

N I C O D E M U S :

OR, A

Treatise

ON

T H E F E A R O F M A N .

WRITTEN IN GERMAN

BY 'AUGUST' HERMAN FRANCK.

ABRIDGED BY

JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

, Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

P R E F A C E.

*To all Ministers and Teachers in Churches and Schools,
Grace, Mercy, and Peace, from God the Father, and our
LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the Fellowship of the HOLY
GHOST.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

GIVE me leave, who am the least of all the servants of JESUS CHRIST, for the love wherewith God hath loved us in his SON, to dedicate to you the following treatise. For though I be the meanest member in the spiritual body of CHRIST, (if so much may be allowed me,) yet am I thereby made partaker of the life, SPIRIT, and power residing in Him, as our Blessed Head. If there be any thing herein conformable to the mind of our great Shepherd, and proceeding from the energy of his SPIRIT, why should it not be readily received? And if, after a true spiritual trial thereof, you find any thing faulty or imperfect, commend it to the mercy of our great Shepherd, to correct in me by the gracious influence of his SPIRIT.

I do not offer this as a piece of great learning. Indeed, the plain truth of my God, set forth in its natural lustre, and the least communication of his power affecting the heart, is infinitely more valuable to me, than all the learning of this world. And my only boasting in the LORD is this, that I have betaken myself to that school wherein the highest wisdom is, "To know JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified." And though I, who have scarce learned the first elements thereof, have the boldness to repeat this my lesson in the hearing of all, yet ought it not to be deemed

an effect of pride ; but the love of my neighbour constraineth me.

My soul hath been many times grieved at the apparent corruption, as of men in general, so of our order in particular ; and more especially when I saw that the fear of man is become the epidemical distemper of our teachers. When I reflect on the one hand, with what spirit, with what joy, with what undaunted courage and boldness the ancient servants of God set aside all regard of man, and delivered as the ambassadors of the LORD, their message fully and plainly, though it exposed them to the evident hazard of their lives ; and on the other, how gently and softly we go about it now, and how little we manifest the truth to the conscience of every man : When I moreover considered, how much they suffered with CHRIST their LORD, for the sake of their testimony ; and how the most of us take care to preach so smoothly, as not to incur the least shadow of their sufferings : The difference between us and them appeared so exceedingly great, that I could not but be astonished at it.

Breth^{ren}, I speak with plainness and simplicity. When our LORD and Master was in this world, He was so far from desiring the riches, honours or pleasures of it, that He was indeed the poorest and most despised among men : Entirely spending all the days of his humiliation, in procuring our salvation. And it is He that tells us, “ Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” We therefore ought to be so many shining lights by our hearty denial of all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world ; and by employing our lives entirely in the assistance of our neighbours. But if, on the contrary, we seek worldly things, then we depart from our glorious pattern ; neither is there any thing that doth more effectually deprive us of the blessing of God upon our calling. For, sure it is, the more we are concerned for honour, profit, or ease, the less shall we be concerned to promote the good of our neighbour. And as long as our

minds are not wholly conformable to the mind of our great Shepherd, it is impossible He should be well pleased with us; for He trieth the hearts and reins. On the contrary, did we desire nothing in the world, we should not fear it.

Did we duly consider, that there is a day before us when we must give an account to the great Bishop of our souls, whether, according to his example, we had nothing else in our eye but the salvation of mankind, should we not apply ourselves to our duty with another kind of fervour than we have hitherto done? Should we not more effectually clear ourselves from all suspicion of either fearing or desiring any thing in this world? Should we not be more earnest to admonish every one in particular? Should we not wrestle more in our prayers for them? Should we not, as soon as any good desire appeared in any, more readily lend him our helping hand, that the spark of grace might be blown up into a flame? Should not our outward conversation be more holy, and consequently more edifying? Verily, my brethren, I fear we have reason to be ashamed, when we read what one saith, ‘A Christian ought to be so enkindled and all-flaming with Divine love, and both inwardly and outwardly so conformable to God, that whenever any one came to him, he might hear nothing from him but God, and his heart and mind ought to be so fixed on Him by burning love, and so ready in all things faithfully to obey his will, that such as visited him, though with cold and lukewarm hearts, might be heated, and set on fire by him. As we see cold and dead coals are kindled, when they are put to glowing ones.’

I have opened my mouth, my brethren, and addressed you with the simplicity of a child, and am very willing to appear mean in your eyes; only despise not the truth, which is not mine, but my LORD’s and Saviour’s. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I count not myself to have apprehended, or to be already perfect. But this I say, (my conscience bearing me witness in the HOLY GHOST, which also the righteous Judge will testify for me at the great day,) that since I have found grace in the eyes of my LORD, to perceive my own misery, and the narrow way to

escape from it, all my thoughts and endeavours have been bent in the faithfulness of my heart, to continue therein, to pursue it more eagerly day by day, and, as far as possible, to direct men to it. I neither despise nor envy any one of you that are of the same function with me. Nay, I know many among you to whom I think myself unworthy to do the meanest service. But I know many likewise, whose conversation is not at all conformable to the pattern CHRIST hath set us. And for these I heartily pray, that God would shew them the things that belong to their eternal peace. Neither is my heart in the least incensed against them that most unjustly slander and reproach me. But I compassionate them, since we must all one day appear before the same Judge: For my part, I cannot call black white, nor take him for a follower of CHRIST, and a pattern of his flock, in whom I find nothing of the mind that was in CHRIST.

If any thing has been vouchsafed to me, it is this, (wherein I heartily rejoice,) that I have been made, though in a very low degree, partaker of the sufferings of CHRIST. And it is the greatest comfort to me, that the men of this world speak all manner of evil of me falsely, loading me with censures and accusations, the groundlessness whereof the LORD will discover at that day.

Let us all, my brethren, think of this great day, and so even our accounts against it, that we may then appear with joy and confidence: Let us cast away all care, but this only. Let us drop all unprofitable contest, and with united hands carry on the work of the LORD, being heartily glad to see his glory advanced, be it by ourselves or others. And I beseech God from the bottom of my heart, to influence you all with a rich measure of his HOLY SPIRIT, to sanctify you to Himself, and to pour his transcendent blessing upon all your planting and watering! The SPIRIT of love and of truth keep all your hearts, and lead them into the fellowship of JESUS CHRIST, who alone is able to give that true peace, which the world cannot give.

AUGUST HERM. FRANCK.

Oct. 26, 1731.

NICODEMUS.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Nature and Causes of the Fear of Man.

1. THE fear of man, in things pertaining to God, is a most heinous vice, and a kind of idolatry, whereby we think, speak, or do some evil, or decline thinking, speaking, or doing some good out of some sort of consideration of men, or apprehension of their displeasure. Now, the more there is of this fear still cleaving to believers, the more dangerous is the condition of their souls.

The causes hereof are either internal or external. The internal are chiefly these :

(1.) Unbelief, which is the root of all vices.

(2.) The love of the world, and the things of the world, and the want of self-denial ; which makes us fear men would prejudice us in our reputation, estate, or ease, if we simply followed the word of God.

(3.) False humility, which is swayed more by the authority of men, than by the word of God, and prompts us to refer all things to the judgment of others, as understanding them better than ourselves.

(4.) An eager desire of visible success in all our undertakings ; whereas we ought to rest satisfied with an inward victory, that is, with having kept a good conscience toward God.

(5.) Want of experience in the ways of God, which makes us hesitate in difficult cases, and indisposes the soul to rely upon God, fearing lest he should let us fail or miscarry in them, or that it would be presumption and tempting of God, to cast ourselves wholly upon him. This proceeds

from our not having sufficiently learned how dear they are to God that entirely trust in him, and what powerful assistance he affords to accomplish his own work in them.

(6.) Neglect of prayer; which not only prevents our obtaining a full conquest over the fear of man, but likewise drives us down farther into the stream of hypocrisy.

The external causes are chiefly these :

(1.) The tyranny of men in power, who, under pretence of preserving the public peace, fetter the consciences both of teachers and hearers.

(2) The forwardness of our Universities in dubbing of heretics : For they no sooner perceive any breakings forth of true Christianity, but they are sure, out of their great zeal, to cast a slur upon it, by giving it an ill name.

(3.) The examples and specious reasonings of those who are bound down by the fear of man.

(4.) Wife and children, that by their importunate way of arguing, and unbelieving tattle and clamour, weary out and overcome many.

(5.) The esteem we have already gained in the world. Those especially who are in any eminent post, find it hard to give up their darling reputation, and suffer reproach with the people of God.

(6.) Too great intimacy with the children of this world, particularly with great and honourable men, who, under pretence of hearty love and kindness, are always cautioning us not to venture too far.

Lastly, the neglect of frequent conversation with true believers, who walk in the power of faith.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Signs and Effects of the Fear of Man.

(1.) A FEARFUL man is not easily convinced of the truth; and though it be laid before him with the clearest evidence,

yet he starts many doubts and scruples about it, lest if he should confess it too roundly, he should be hated, persecuted, or reputed a heretic.

(2.) He is never so busy in starting objections, as in cases that most tend to the glory of God.

(3.) When he is convinced of the truth, he will not confess it before men; or if he do, it is only among the lovers of truth: But before the enemies thereof, he conceals or denies it, or talks so dubiously about it, as to leave them uncertain whether he believes it or no; at least he takes care so to order his words as to be able to give them always a handsome turn, and so to come off without trouble. If he lives in a place where truth is professed, he owns it open-mouthed; but if he comes to another place, he finds many difficulties in the point, so that he resolves to halt between both, and leave it undetermined.

(4.) When he finds he cannot avoid owning the truth, yet he takes care so to limit and pinch it, that it may appear tolerable even to the enemies of truth.

(5.) A fearful man will at last break out into an avowed confession of truth; but it is when he finds himself well backed with human authority; that is, when a person of unspotted reputation and great learning hath asserted the same before him. Accordingly he is more careful to arm himself with a fine train of human testimonies, than with the word of God itself; and thinks he has a right so to do, because he sees the cheerful confessors of truth have sometimes stopped the mouths of their shameless adversaries with such arguments.

(6.) When some good work is to be done, he doth not undertake it with a simple reliance on the living God; but when he finds good patrons on his side, he at last sets about it. Yet when he sees the storm arise, and the waves beat, he gives way, and so loses all he had gained.

(7.) He always finds something to blame in the behaviour of faithful labourers. Sometimes he fears 'they go too far.' Sometimes, finding nothing to tax in the thing itself, he blames the manner of doing it. When he finds

nothing else to cavil at, he cries, The work is not well timed. Thus he always sees some fault; though, indeed, there is none but his own want of faith.

(8.) He is very apt to believe any false reports against the faithful children of God; and because his own heart fails, he is very forward in warning them to take heed to themselves; thus, by his prudence, damping and stifling the cheerfulness of their faith.

(9.) He does not love that a Minister should make too plain and particular an application of his sermons, or show too great earnestness in his function, or profession of Christianity.

(10.) A fearful man is easily moved to envy; especially when he sees those that are young acting cheerfully in faith; and cries, 'That is none of his business, but must be left to those of more knowledge and experience.'

(11.) He either himself exposes as presumptuous, stubborn, self-conceited, proud, and Pharisaical, those who, with a free and child-like spirit, break through all opposition; or at least, sits on the bench when they are thus condemned, and consents to the unjust sentence pronounced against them.

(12.) A fearful Minister reproves common people boldly; but when he is to speak to great and honourable persons, his mouth is gagged.

(13.) The pulpit is a fearful Preacher's strong-hold; but when he is to speak face to face, and to bear witness to the truth, by saying, "Thou art the man," then he is very supple and complaisant.

(14.) When he hears profane, loose, or foolish talking, he holds his tongue, and when it comes from great men, he graces it with a smile.

(15.) Above all things, a fearful man cannot abide to be singular.

(16.) Sometimes he desires to do something to the glory of God; but he soon confronts the thought with 'What will people say?' And then fairly drops it.

(17.) He cautiously shuns frequent and familiar conversa-

tion with the members of CHRIST that are despised by the world. Or if he be willing to converse with them by night and in secret, yet he cares not to appear with them in public. He rather appoints some certain place to meet them, where it may not be taken notice of.

(18.) A fearful Preacher makes it his business in his public discourses, to bring in something against enthusiasm and fanaticism; and then he thinks he may venture to speak the truth: Which is true enough. For the world takes it for granted, that he means it as they apprehend it, that is, as spoken against those on whom they falsely bestow those names.

(19.) A fearful man rejoiceth for a time, while the light of truth shines upon him; but as soon as he is called to account for it, he is sore afraid, makes many excuses, and, by all manner of shifts and evasions, endeavours to extricate himself, and to get rid of the suspicion of it.

(20.) Instead of reproving his neighbour, he says, 'God is so merciful, that he does not doubt but He will himself reclaim him in due time.'

(21.) When he is to press the inward truth of Christianity, he says, 'It is too high for them.' If he is to enforce any thing of outward behaviour, he accounts it a little thing, or else says, 'We must not begin at outward things.'

CHAPTER III.

Of the Mischiefs caused by the Fear of Man.

1. MANY thousands of souls are thereby kept back from a true conversion: Because they dare not suffer the knowledge of the truth to shine upon them in its full strength, but hold it imprisoned, as it were, by manifold shifts and pretences.

2. Many who are already converted are hereby hindered from growth in holiness: As they deprive themselves of

many opportunities (which they greatly need) to strengthen and edify themselves in God ; for this fear makes them avoid the conversation of those who are most able to build them up in the faith ; and run into many other sins against the dictates of their own conscience.

Again, as a free and ready confession of the truth highly advances a man in faith and love, so the denying or hiding it keeps him quite down, and hinders him from attaining the power of the SPIRIT. Many know not what the reason is, why they advance so slowly in spiritual growth. It is plainly this, the fear of man, lurking within, eats out the vigour and activity of the life of grace. God, it is certain, does infinitely abound in mercy, and would willingly every day pour out new blessings upon us. But a fearful man is not receptive of them. He doth not act in singleness of heart. He dares not trust God, and God therefore cannot fill him with the fulness of his graces.

3. When Ministers, in particular, are unable to overcome the fear of man, they grow dejected and heartless in the discharge of their function, and scarce know themselves what or how they ought to speak. They become listless in all their performances : So that the most excellent gifts which God has bestowed upon them, become altogether fruitless, and what good might have been done is either never attempted or left unfinished. Indeed it cannot be expected that any one enslaved to this fear, should ever by his cold endeavours, thoroughly reform any abuse of long continuance. The fear of man is always for maintaining old customs : And while every one is afraid of innovation, abuses are authorized more and more, and all things proceed from bad to worse.

And though there were two or more such Ministers in the same place, they will perform nothing worthy of their calling : Nay, the one hindereth the other from the faithful discharge of his pastoral duty. Yea, it would be better for many to have for their fellow-labourer, one that was openly wicked, who might perhaps, by his enormities, force the truth from them, than a timorous NICODEMUS,

who, by shunning it himself, teaches them to shun the light.

And such as the Minister is, such are commonly the hearers. If he therefore be afraid, how will his hearers ever be excited to a true cheerfulness of faith? And those of them, who, by the grace of God, are freed from this base bondage, can never have any confidence in their teacher, till he is disengaged from that servile spirit. Many Ministers wonder why the true children of God have so little confidence in them: Not considering this plain reason of it, that their flock never saw in them the least proof of a good shepherd, who readily exposes himself to any sufferings, yea, "lays down his life for his sheep."

Such servants as these, God will not fail, in due time, to crown with success. He will manifest his glory in them, and make bare his arm before them. But there is nothing of all this, where unbelief hath gained admittance, and where the honour due to God from and before all men, is not undauntedly rendered to him. For a fearful man trusts God no farther than his own poor reason carries him. When any thing crosses that, he presently giveth way; and therefore, wanting the courage of a lively faith, he can never behold the glory of God.

4. When the well-wishers to religion see those who know the truth, or at least ought to do so, backward in owning it, they are not a little encouraged to play the hypocrite themselves, instead of freely and boldly avowing their Master. And it often happens, that by the fearfulness of one eminent man, thousands are infected with the spirit of hypocrisy and dissimulation.

5. On the other hand, when the adversaries of truth see them that love it, shun the light, it strengthens them in their bad cause, concluding that if they were in the right, they would have no need to fear; and as, if you resist the Devil, he will flee from you, so the reverse is full as true. The more you fear, and give way to the Devil and his instruments, the more will they pursue and press upon you.

6. In a word, the fear of man, is the general bane both of city and country. Our superiors would appoint good Ministers and Magistrates; but they fear displeasing this or the other man, or set of men. They who should speak when a wicked Minister is ordained, or officer recommended, hold their tongues through fear. In the courts of judicature, this fear prevents justice, condemns the innocent, clears the guilty, bereaves widows and orphans of their right, and leaves the injured and oppressed without remedy. And what does it profit a man who is himself a slave to this fear, that he is sensible of the general corruption? It only exposes him to the more pain. Being unwilling to break either with the world or God, he is looked upon as an unfaithful steward by both; and he endures far more trouble and anxiety, than the breaking through with a ready presence of faith would have cost him. He finds no joyful, filial assurance in prayer. The word of God has no relish with him. He never attains to the true communion of saints, and when he should comfort and strengthen others by exhorting them in the power of God, he rather drives them to fear, and quenches the HOLY SPIRIT in them. Thus he goes on without any spiritual experience, contenting himself with the bare letter and shadows of Christianity, and a few sounding words, but being in the mean time void of soul and life, of spirit and power. And so falling at last into a state of carnal security, he carries others also along with him; often to the utter denying the truth, and precipitating himself into final destruction.



CHAPTER IV.

Of the Excuses that are usually made for the Fear of Man.

As soon as we begin with true humility to acknowledge the fear of man, as a great and most heinous evil, and accord-

ingly to watch and pray, and strive against it, there is hope we may overcome; but there are very few that will acknowledge it. The very most, when charged therewith, labour to hide it with various excuses, some of which are so specious, that they blind the eyes of many, so that they approve their conduct, and praise their saying,

(1.) ‘Should I act thus, I should soon be called to an account for it.’ Well; but should this hinder a faithful servant from executing his Master’s orders with all sincerity? ‘But I shall be put to charges and trouble, nay, perhaps be turned out of my livelihood.’ Perhaps not; God is well able to protect thee. But if trouble do overtake thee, still have faith in God, and thou shalt not be a loser for his sake. God is a faithful Lord and Master. Be it only thy care to be a faithful servant. Whatever thou lovest in his cause, He will restore it to thee an hundred fold. Happy art thou when thou sufferest for conscience sake. Though man cast thee off, God will take thee up. But if thou art unwilling to lose thy place for the sake of a good conscience, it is plain thou servest thy belly, and not God.

(2.) ‘But I have a wife and children to take care of.’ Hear, then, what the LORD saith unto thee: “He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.” True it is, that he who provideth not for his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. But God’s honour must not suffer one jot under pretence of providing for thy family. Thou mayest not, on that pretence, go out of the way of the commandment, to the right hand or to the left. Thou must do neither less nor more than if thou hadst none: Only learn what that meaneth: “Seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

(3.) ‘But we must not pull down sufferings upon our own heads, or wilfully run into them.’ Neither must thou be afraid of suffering. As long as this flinching from the cross is in thee, thy faith is not right. When a good thing cannot be done without suffering, thou art absolutely bound to take it up. It is better to suffer all things, than

to have an evil conscience. Trouble not thyself, but do thou heartily the will of God. He will not lay upon thee more than thou art able to bear. Thou representest things to thyself worse than indeed they now are. Thou art afraid of men: But glorify the LORD God in thy heart, and they will be afraid of thee.

(4.) 'Why, we do what we can.' Thou canst not do any thing of thyself: CHRIST alone doeth all that is good in and by thee. But who can boast that he does as much as the SPIRIT of CHRIST enables him to do? He that weighs all things well, must needs acknowledge, he cannot answer to God for the many things that he hath omitted, which he might have overcome by the power of faith, and which will appear in judgment against him. At the beginning, very little appears possible; but if we go on boldly, relying upon God, we shall find ourselves supported in doing greater things, yea, able to do "all things through CHRIST who strengtheneth us."

(5.) 'If such as are leading men, who ought to be foremost in good undertakings, would but break the ice, we would readily follow them; but we do not care to be the first beginners, as if we were better than they.' Do as a servant that carries the torch before his master, and yet does not think himself better than his master. The kingdom of God did not come first to men of the first rank, or to them who made the greatest figure in the world. When thou art to receive thy reward, wilt thou refuse to receive it till thy superior be paid first? In the kingdom of God there must be no dispute about precedency. Let not, therefore, the unbelief of others keep thee back in thy race; knowing this, that if thou art convinced of the truth, and yet actest not according to thy conviction, God will certainly punish thy disobedience, though thou shouldest appeal to Pope or Emperor.

(6.) 'But I am no Minister, I have no business to take care of men's souls.' No! Art thou not a Christian? (though not a Minister;) and is it not the business, the bounden duty of every Christian, to endeavour to bring his neighbour back into the right way, whenever he sees

him wandering in vice and delusion? Is not every Christian one that is anointed with the SPIRIT of CHRIST, who consequently is bound to tread in his steps, by making his whole life one continued endeavour to save all men from the wrath to come? Thou mayest not indeed take upon thee to administer the Sacraments, to cast out of the Church, or receive the penitent into it again; these are the peculiar offices of those who are so called of GOD as was AARON. But thou must, at the peril of thy salvation, follow the example of CHRIST, as well as they. Thou, as well as they, must observe all the laws of GOD, especially that of doing good unto all men. Spiritual good above all; since it is not to Ministers alone, but to all men that he hath said, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

(7.) 'However, we must use prudence.' True; but there are two sorts of it: One that is from above, the other from beneath. The former of these is unreprieveable, and a most precious gift of the Most High. But that which is from beneath, hath the appearance indeed of wisdom, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. Where the fear of the LORD is not continually before the eyes, there the foundation of it is already laid. Where faith is weak, there she raises herself; when love grows cold, then is she strong. She informs us how to please GOD without displeasing the world; to follow CHRIST, and yet avoid the cross. As long as the kingdom of GOD consists in words only, she cannot utter all she has to say. But when it is to be demonstrated in power, then she has recourse to many evasions, and cautions others, (out of hearty good-will,) not to venture too far. Then she jumbles light and darkness together; she shifts and turns every way to keep the cross from her shoulders. She swims with the stream, and cares not to converse with those who suffer reproach for CHRIST's sake. She keeps on indeed the appearance of godliness as long as possible, and yet holdeth her tongue when the children of GOD are condemned; nay, sometimes joins in pronouncing their sentence. She does much evil that good

may come of it. But who is able to describe all the faces of this horrible monster, which is come up out of the bottomless pit? It is true, we must use prudence; but consider well which sort of prudence thou wilt use. Yea, set thyself before this glass, that thou mayest know by which of these thou hast squared thy life and actions hitherto.

(8.) 'But we must stay a little; another time may do better. We may do more good by a little delay.' Where has GOD given thee leave to delay till the next moment what may be done at this? To let slip any opportunity, in order to reserve thyself for some more favourable time? ST. PAUL bids us "redeem time," or, (more exactly according to the Greek,) buy up every opportunity, namely, lay hold of it as soon as ever it offers. Reserving thyself for a more convenient season, proceeds purely from false prudence. This reserve accustoms thee to hypocrisy. It continually strengthens the fear from which it flows, and will hinder thee from ever meeting with an opportunity to exert the true power of faith.

(9.) 'To undertake a thing without being able to effect it, does more hurt than good; therefore it is better not to begin.' Thou dost well to compute the charge of building before thou beginnest to build the tower. But whence wilt thou procure the charge? From thy own ability? No, that can never reach it. Begin thy work with full reliance upon GOD, and draw thy supplies from Almighty goodness and wisdom, and by this means thou wilt be enabled to accomplish at his cost, the work once begun.

Or if GOD, for holy reasons, should not prosper thy endeavours, it will be a comfort to thee that thou hast done thy part; and thy conscience will be more easy, than if thou hast distrusted GOD, and so never set about it. Perhaps he trieth thee hereby, and though it has not succeeded now, it may at another time. Perhaps thy very endeavours may stir up many to an imitation of thy zeal. But if thou shouldest be disappointed in all thy good purposes, shouldest thou conclude, 'That thy work of love had been in vain?

Examine thyself, whether thy desire of open success in all things, be not the effect of great pride lurking within? Be thou satisfied with the inward victory, a true Christian can never be deprived of, which consists in thy continuing unwearied in the patience of hope.

(10.) ‘But we cannot do all at once.’ Thou unprofitable servant, shouldest thou therefore bury thy talent in a napkin, and do nothing at all? Thou knowest not what thou canst do, or rather, what God can do by thee. If thou wilt but lay aside the fear of man, and set out boldly in his strength, God is able to do for and by thee exceeding abundantly, above all that thou canst ask or think.

(11.) ‘However, we ought to go fair and softly to work, and do what good we can, considerately and by degrees.’ Ay, this is something indeed. If we could but persuade the Devil to go fair and softly too! But alas! “he walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” What hast thou then to do, but to “resist him steadfast in the faith,” and to press on in the power of the HOLY GHOST? The Devil laughs at all thy ‘fair and softly:’ Give him but time, and he will not lose a moment. And the blood of those whom thy softness hath destroyed, will God require at thy hands.

(12.) ‘But an edge too sharp is easily turned.’ If you would infer hence, That we should not contend earnestly for the faith, that it is not always good to be zealously affected in a good thing, or that we may sometimes hide our zeal, wink at the faults of our neighbours, or otherwise dissemble with them: This is all false prudence; this is directly contrary to the cross of CHRIST. It is but just that we show love and meekness toward all men; especially when we declare to them the overflowing kindness of God. But at the same time we must use all possible earnestness, lest our love be made a cloak for our wickedness. And whenever we do not, unbelief and the fear of man are at the bottom of our hearts; however we labour by these specious words to excuse our being neither hot nor cold.

(13.) ‘But it is visible what great disorders arise when

people are too forward.' It is very possible that young and unexperienced Christians, may at first make some false steps. And this mote in their eye, you presently discern; nay, and perhaps triumph over them. Take heed to thyself: We ought to bear with the faults of beginners, with great gentleness and compassionate love: And if we think ourselves more knowing than they, to set them right in the spirit of meekness. But God looks not on things with thy eyes. There is a vast difference between one that is still spiritually dead, and one that has recovered life from God, though he is still weak and encompassed with infirmity. Though thou art stronger, draw not back because he is weak. Break thou thyself through those impediments, which he could not, and show others by thy example, how to serve God with more purity and wisdom.

(14.) 'By too open a declaration, we may hinder a great deal of good that otherwise might be done; nay, overturn all: Whereas by a prudent concealing of ourselves, we may do a great deal of service.' This is nothing but another piece of false prudence: For though it is true that an understanding man finds a time for silence as well as for speaking, yet a true Christian ought to trust in God, that he will so far bless the good he aims at, as that no other good undertaking will be hindered by it. If thou hast not this steadfast confidence in God, the Devil will be sure to delude thee at pleasure; always representing such phantoms, as will make thee let go what thou hast in thy hand, to catch at a shadow.

It is matter of wonder that there are many, who, though they cannot name so much as one man whom they have really converted to God, yet will not in any one particular vigorously break through opposition, 'for fear of overturning all.' All! Why thou hadst never yet built up any thing, which can be overthrown. But if God hath done some good by thee already, then I doubt not but he will do more. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee," is his promise to thee and all his servants.

And with this promise, every true servant of GOD may bid defiance to the world. Remember, “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Let us but follow this rule with singleness of heart, and resign to GOD the care of what is to come. For no good can ever be better advanced, than when one wedge drives another, and we daily grow more bold, in heartily promoting the cause of CHRIST, and the good of his Church.

(15.) ‘But we must have a care of getting an ill name: For then we should do no good at all:’ This is the grand excuse for the fear of man, and it is at the bottom of almost all the rest. This is what the men of prudence never fail to urge in their defence; and in this they suppose themselves impregnable. ‘If I get an ill name, I can do no good.’ Hast thou learned this in the word of GOD? Hath CHRIST taught thee this? Saith he not, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company: Yea, when they shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the SON of Man’s sake. —Behold your reward is great in heaven; for in like manner did their fathers unto the Prophets. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you; for so did their fathers to the false Prophets.” To persuade men therefore that the reproach of CHRIST is an hinderance to the course of the Gospel, is a true fetch of the Devil’s, by which he endeavours to make void the cross of CHRIST: Whereas, on the contrary, every one of us must most certainly believe that he can do nothing at all to the purpose, so long as he refuses to wear the badge of CHRIST.

Yes, thou thinkest in thy heart, ‘By my being reserved, and not exposing myself, some may be won.’ Thou wilt only make hypocrites like thyself; men that are vainly puffed up by a little knowledge, and yet ashamed of CHRIST and his word, and unwilling to suffer any persecution for the cross of CHRIST. But if once thou canst resolve, with unshaken presence of mind, to break loose from the bondage of fearfulness, and thus to evidence thy faith, by taking on thee the reproach of CHRIST, then “others waxing confi-

dent by thy sufferings, will be more emboldened to speak without fear."

'But we must not expose ourselves: We must not suffer ourselves to be made fools of by others.' We must not, I grant, do any thing which is foolish, that is, contrary to God's word. But it is the Devil's suggestion, that we should expose ourselves by directing our actions precisely according to it. Here it is, that ST. PAUL's caution will do us great service. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." Is it not a shame, when the LORD of glory was taken for a madman, and one possessed by the Devil, for thee to be highly esteemed of the world? By this thou givest evidence against thyself, that thou dost not belong to CHRIST, that thou knowest not the dignity of his cross; and how then wilt thou be able to rejoice with Him? It neither can nor must be otherwise. Thou must be looked upon as a fool in the world, if thou wilt be a disciple of CHRIST. It will not fail thee an hair's breadth; high and low, teachers and hearers, must all alike be censured by the world, when once they earnestly turn themselves to God. For as soon as they cease to be conformed to the fashionable ways of the world, the world is immediately offended, and begins to scoff and rail, charging them with fanaticism, singularity, Pharisaical hypocrisy, and what not? Loading them with a thousand lies and calumnies. And he that is afraid of this reproach from the world, must continue an hypocrite as long as he lives.

(16.) 'Yet though we must not be conformed to the world, we must "become all things to all men," as ST. PAUL testifies of himself he did, "that by all means he might gain some."' ST. PAUL gave sufficient proof of his being an undaunted workman, to whom God had given not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power: But what hast thou to show for thyself? Worldly-minded men can become all to all too; but from another principle, by other means, and for quite another end. Canst thou express the

bold alacrity of ST. PAUL, who was not afraid to withstand ST. PETER himself to the face, when the fear of man had made him play the hypocrite, “so that” others “also were carried away by his dissimulation?” It is certainly a great piece of wisdom, so to become weak with the weak, as not to lose any thing of our own strength; so to become all to all, as to stand free from all manner of hypocrisy. Examine then thyself, whether the serpent, with his prudence, hath not perverted thy mind from the simplicity of CHRIST. There is no cloak that more plausibly covers the fear of man than this; therefore look to it, that above all things thou dispatch this enemy.

Neither excuse thy conforming to the world in rich clothes, banquets, dancing, plays, and the like, by saying, ‘I take no delight in these trifles; but I submit to them, that I may have the more power over them that do.’ This is one of the fruits of our modern religion, raised on maxims of state-policy; but if we bring it to the test, it is altogether inconsistent with “the truth, as it is in JESUS.” ‘But you are for taking away the abuse of these things, and letting the use remain.’ The true children of God, who are crucified to the world, cannot find the least true use in them. When they would avoid or prevent any evil, or do any good, either to their own souls, or their neighbour, they have no need of the Devil’s rattles, but fly to their God, and commit their whole cause to his direction. They rest themselves, while they use only such measures as he directs, in full confidence that he will do what is best: And they enjoy even the necessary refreshments of their bodies for no other end, but to spend the strength received thereby, in humble acknowledgment and child-like thankfulness, and to renew the vigour of their soul and body for the service of their neighbours.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Means whereby we may be delivered from the Fear of Man.

1. **THE** first and most necessary of all means is, a constant and earnest endeavour to free ourselves from the most dangerous deceitfulness of our own hearts. Nothing is a more fatal hinderance of a man's salvation, than the false conceit that he is already a Christian, and so has no more need of laying again the foundation of repentance, or of the first conversion to God.

There is no error which is more difficult to remove than this: Especially in a Minister; who having undertaken to show others the way to heaven, pre-supposes that he is himself therein. And because he sees but little difference between himself and his hearers, and knows nothing of a saving change of heart, he by wholesale takes them all for Christians; and, like a blind Pharisee, reproves nothing but outward vices. His own inward part being not yet cleansed, he cannot awaken others out of their slumber, and bring them over from their false imaginary faith, to a true, living one, working by love. And by means of these unconverted Preachers, destitute of all experimental knowledge of spiritual things, whole parishes, cities and countries are countenanced in their carnal security.

Now when God is pleased to send forth faithful witnesses of his truth, to awaken men out of their spiritual slumber, then is the Devil most busy to second this security with the fear of man; one fearing this, another that, so that both together choke the truth of God in the heart. The best advice that can be given to a man in this case is, that he thoroughly search into his own condition, according to the tenor of the word of God, that he may not be deluded with vain hopes. By this means he may come to a full assurance of the state of his soul, and feel the **SPIRIT** of God witnessing with his spirit, that he is a child of **GOD**: But till he

will thus search into the bottom of his heart, he cannot be freed from this fear. Nor will he be able to make a right use of any means at all that may be offered him: For without the power of the HOLY GHOST, which till then he cannot have, a man will never get so far as to eye God only in all his actions: And till he does this, it is impossible he should discharge his duty without the fear of man.

2. As the want of self-denial is one of the chief causes of the fear of man, it will be absolutely necessary, in order to the subduing it, to labour after a true self-denying frame of spirit: For as long as we fear the loss of our ease, or goods, or honour, or greatness in the world, so long we shall be loath, by a close following the steps of our LORD, to incur the displeasure of men; till, therefore, a man “renounceth himself, he cannot be his disciple.” But when once we seek no honour, but what cometh from God, nor any pleasure, but that of doing his will, we shall find it easy to confess the truth, with undauntedness, both in word and deed.

Let him then, who will come after CHRIST, “deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Him.” And he that begins to be a proficient in this, will find the fear of man vanishing of itself. For why do we fear men? For no other reason, but because we are afraid of the cross. And why do we fear the cross? Because we understand not the infinite good that lies hid in it. Because we apprehend not, that since the fall, whatever is really good, must spring up under the cross.

3. And that we may never be weary of bearing it, or faint in our minds, we should frequently and deeply meditate on the vanity, and even nothingness of this world, this idle dream, this vanishing shadow; on the nothingness of man himself; a worm, a vapour, a leaf driven by the wind; even in his best estate, “walking in a vain show, and disquieting himself in vain;” on the glorious Majesty of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and the unspeakable joys that are at his right hand for evermore; on the several degrees of that glory, which shall be propor-

tioned to our several degrees of obedience ; and in particular, on the mighty rewards annexed to the denial of ourselves, and cheerful taking up our cross.

4. The servants of CHRIST find this also a sure means to conquer, when they are assaulted by the fear of man, to enter immediately into deep meditation on the bitter passion of our LORD. This is the antidote which ST. PETER prescribes, “ Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try every one of you ; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of the sufferings of CHRIST.” (1 *Pet.* iv. 12.)—And so ST. PAUL, “ Consider Him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.” And again, “ We always bear about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the life of Him also might be made manifest in our mortal body.”

This is the true Apostolic mind, which few apprehend ; but those who do apprehend and obtain it, tread in the same steps, and declare themselves servants of the living God in true cheerfulness of faith. “ They are not afraid of the terror of men, but sanctify the LORD God in their hearts :” Having determined “ to know ” and regard “ nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified.”

5. Add to this, The consideration of those faithful companions of CHRIST, mentioned in the Scriptures as well as other Histories. This was the way ST. PAUL took to encourage them that were weak in faith, in the 11th Chapter of his Epistle to the *Hebrews* ; which, being an excellent Abstract of the whole Old Testament, ought to be more especially pondered by us, and applied for the support of our faith, in all outward and inward temptations. The histories likewise of the primitive, as well as later Martyrs, were they more attentively considered, would contribute much toward our attaining a true boldness of faith, so necessary for our Christian warfare.

But chiefly (I repeat it again) “ Look ye unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith.” Consider Him, or (as the Greek word properly signifies) make a comparison, between what CHRIST hath suffered, and what ye suffer.

Consider what proportion there is between the two ; for sure it is, if you will be his followers, you must be ever determined and prepared “ to resist even unto blood, striving against sin.”

This it was that so powerfully inspired ST. PAUL, to expose himself to all manner of sufferings. For the mark he always had in his eye was, “ To know CHRIST, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” And ST. PETER, from the same ground, saith, “ If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called ; because CHRIST also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.” CHRIST himself also gives us the same instruction : “ Remember the word which I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ;” wherefore, if any man would in good earnest be rid of the fear of man, let him eye continually the example and image of CHRIST ; and know assuredly, he cannot be happier than when he cometh up to the nearest conformity with his suffering crucified LORD. If his love be sincere, it will kindle in his heart an ardent desire to be made like unto Him ; and this desire will dispel all the fear of man, because it makes the cross, which is so bitter to the flesh, delightful to the spirit, so that it can no more hinder his drinking gladly “ the cup which his FATHER hath given him.”

Nay, ST. PAUL assures us, that a man not only overcomes thereby, but that he is “ more than conqueror ;” intimating, that by this victory he gains an inconceivable advantage over all the sufferings that can befall him for the Gospel’s sake. “ Who shall separate us from the love of God ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecutions, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.” Nor does he stop here, but expresses the undaunted cheerfulness of his heart yet more emphatically ; “ I am persuaded that neither life,

nor death, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."—Let us, dear brethren, in like manner, press on in spirit into the living and powerful fellowship of JESUS CHRIST, so that we may "live no more, but He may live in us, and the life which we now live in the flesh we may live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved us, and gave Himself for us." Thus all fear will soon vanish out of our heart, and the joyful SPIRIT of CHRIST will fill up the room it had there, and make us grow in strength, comfort and encourage us in all our combats, and afford us a continual train of victories.

6. Let us then apply ourselves to God in earnest prayer, that he would be pleased to vouchsafe us this SPIRIT, even "the SPIRIT of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." This is not of us, but the free gift of God, which gift He is most ready to impart to those who heartily pray for it. Let us then ask, that we may receive; and more especially at such times, when we are called to act any thing that requires some exerting of the power of faith, let us have a care to do nothing according to our own fancy, but, in the first place, lay it open before God in prayer, and then set upon it armed with the whole armour of God.

7. Now as JESUS CHRIST is he that can most certainly deliver us from all fear of man, so none can teach us better than He Himself, by what means we must fight against it. And this he hath carefully done, especially in the latter part of his state of humiliation, leaving his disciples, in his farewell discourse to them, (*St. John* 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 Chapters,) a most effectual medicine against it. Now the chief point insisted on herein, is his promise of sending the HOLY GHOST to his disciples, whom also he calls the Comforter, because He drives away all fear of man out of the heart, filling and overflowing the same (which bare reason cannot do) with a stream of life and power.

Therefore, let him that would be a follower of CHRIST in truth, read and consider this with due application; and

then with full assurance accept of, and rely upon, this his promise, and with filial freedom and confidence pray to CHRIST to make it good unto him. And verily, if we do bear reproach for his name's sake, "the SPIRIT of glory and of GOD resteth upon us." And since CHRIST Himself is so near to them who suffer for his sake, that thereby they become habitations of GOD, upon which the glory of GOD resteth, yea, which are filled with the SPIRIT of glory and of GOD; should we not, when tempted to fear man, be strongly moved thereby, to resist the temptation with all our might, and steadfastly believe that the power of GOD will be perfected in our weakness? And what a comfort is it, that the SPIRIT Himself "helpeth our infirmities!" Yea, and "maketh intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered!" That is, most powerfully, and in a manner altogether inconceivable by human reason: He being our continual Advocate in heaven, and in the Council of the Holy Trinity, bequeathed to us by CHRIST, as long as we continue orphans in this world. Nay, CHRIST Himself, who is at the right hand of GOD, ever making intercession for us. O that we were thoroughly sensible of the joy and readiness lodged in the heart of GOD, to support all those who, seeking all their help from Him alone, rely wholly on his paternal goodness! How easily then should we get rid of the fear of man, and even blush for shame, that we had ever been diverted by it from any good undertaking!

8. But all these means will nothing avail, if we consult in any thing with flesh and blood, or with other fearful men. As soon as ever therefore we desire to be made free, we must either wholly forsake these persons, and avoid all conversation with them, or at least use it so far as absolute necessity requires, with the utmost caution and circumspection. Many have undertaken a good thing in readiness of faith, but while they did not set about it immediately, without conferring with flesh and blood, but first asked the advice of this and another friend, they gave over the design, and stifled the gift of GOD that was in them. Indeed,

it is not to be expressed how many useful designs are by this means hindered and laid aside. Doubtless we ought not to rely too much on our own prudence, or to slight the advice of experienced men; but we must beware too of the other extreme, of “being tossed about with every wind of doctrine.” For it is a good thing, that the heart be established; which stability is obtained by faith, but is easily lost again by the fearful talk of those who have little faith.

9. On the contrary, let us confer with the holy Apostles, and observe the unusual earnestness, wherewith they labour to free every one that nameth the name of CHRIST, from the fear of man. Would you know with what weapons they armed themselves against it, “as good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST?” Why they “took unto them the whole armour of GOD, and so were able to withstand in the evil day.” And thus may you gain the victory, which you will never be able to obtain by human weapons, such as wit and learning.

(10.) Indeed, not only the writings of the Apostles, not only all Holy Writ, from the beginning thereof to the end, but heaven and earth, yea, and all the creatures of GOD, would assist us, would we consider them with a believing heart. Doth not our SAVIOUR, to reproach our idle fear, send us even to the sparrows for better information? “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your FATHER.” Nay, he directs us to the very hairs of our head, saying, “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Elsewhere, he takes the grass of the field to witness against our little faith: And all this to expose our horrible unbelief, and to represent to us in a clear light, that a man by faith becomes the most glorious, and by unbelief the most base and miserable of all creatures.

(11.) Stand fast, therefore, as becomes those to whom are made all those glorious declarations: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,” which plainly alludes to *Exodus* xix. 34, where we find these emphatical expressions of GOD, “Ye have seen

what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. For all the earth is mine: And ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Now, not only Israel after the flesh, but all the people of God, have a right to lay claim to, and comfort themselves with all these his glorious promises. And to what purpose did he make them? Was it not to assure all his servants, that none, how powerful soever, should be able to hurt them, as long as they continued faithful to his covenant? Nor is it possible for the whole world to hurt one that entirely relies on his promises. For he who trusts in God, doth by this faith so unite himself to the power of the living God, that thereby he becomes much stronger than the whole world, whether visible or invisible.

This precious promise of God, concerning the Royal Priesthood of his Saints, was confirmed and sealed by the death and blood of the Son of God. "JESUS CHRIST the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth, hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his FATHER." Let every Christian then demonstrate himself to be one of these Royal Priests, by breaking through all difficulties, into a true cheerfulness of faith, which He is willing to give to all, without respect of persons; by fighting manfully the battles of the LORD, and pressing on for the prize of his high calling!

Let every one that hath by baptism begun to renounce the Devil and all his works, entirely dedicate himself to the service of the LORD of Hosts. Let him deeply consider with how high and holy a Majesty, with how great a Monarch, (who indeed is the only Potentate,) he hath entrusted his soul and body; and no more "fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Let him think with himself how secure he is under the protection of so great a King. "He dwelleth in the secret of the Most

High ; he abideth in the shadow of the Almighty." But let him also duly consider, that he is not to fight this combat by his own strength ;* but that the Captain of the LORD'S Hosts, delivering his own sword to him, will arm him with his own power, and say unto him as he did unto JOSHUA, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong, and of good courage ; be not afraid ; neither be thou dismayed : For the LORD thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest."

In fine, renew thyself daily in the spirit of thy mind, and draw life and nourishment from the word of God. Stir up thyself in prayer, and strengthen thyself with the company of other faithful Christians ; since, "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is CHRIST in the midst of them." Thou oughtest to "stir up the gift of God," the child-like cheerful Spirit always, and without intermission, even as a fire, by constant blowing, is kept up to a flame. Press toward higher degrees of faith, by pondering the promises of God, and continually exercising thy love to thy neighbour, with all singleness of heart, to the uttermost of thy power, wherever God giveth thee opportunity. For nothing conduces more to the increase of faith, than a continual exercise of it.

And if a man knows himself to be naturally bashful and fearful, let him with the greater earnestness assault this enemy, and labour to keep a conscience void of offence, lest his natural fearfulness grow upon him. Let him have a care, in the beginning, not to make himself the slave of other men, especially of them that are in high places, but behave himself always as a faithful servant of God, in all discretion and humility. Or if he have at last fallen short, let him the more now encourage himself in God, to obey Him henceforth rather than man ; not suffering himself to be any more shaken, either by force or subtlety. He ought to lift up his head in the power of CHRIST, though under the hardest combat and greatest poverty of spirit, and to make the glory of God his whole and sole end, in all he does, or leaves undone. Blessed is he that thus standeth

his ground in all combats and assaults. He shall go from faith to faith, from strength to strength, and finally, overcome and inherit all things with CHRIST.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Christian Discretion.

(1.) As flesh and blood is commonly inclined either to exceed or fall short in matters of duty, so it is easy, while we avoid the fear of man, to run into presumption, rashness, inconsiderateness. Therefore it is necessary that we be continually on our guard, that so our boldness may be ever tempered by wisdom; that wisdom I mean which cometh from above, and is called by ST. LUKE, “the wisdom of the just.” And so ST. PAUL styles it, the spirit of a sound mind: “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” For indeed, one SPIRIT works all this in man; and through him again in others: Making him not only discharge his duty with undaunted courage, and giving him a pure desire to promote nothing but the glory of God, and the good of his neighbour, but enabling him also, in all his doings and sufferings, to behave with Divine prudence and wisdom. And “if any lack this wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him.” It shall be surely given him who continually keeps a watchful eye over his own spirit, who is ever humbling himself in the sight of God; and, like a helpless infant, praying to God for discretion and understanding, and taking the word of God for his constant counsellor.

(2.) Where this foundation is laid, we need not fear any hurt from the boldness of faith. And though perhaps, for want of experience, it may not always be exerted in due time and place, yet are we to take heed as soon as we are sensible of it, not to be too much dejected for this imper-

fection; but to praise God, who therefore shows us our failings that we may mend them, and who will himself supply what is yet behind.* And whenever we observe such failings in others, we ought to be particularly cautious how we judge them; for God will not judge according to our, but according to his own mind; and “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He hath often perfected praise.”

But hereby we do not in the least reflect upon any one, who from a long experience in the ways of the Lord, doth, in the Spirit of love, mind his brother of the failings which have overtaken him in any of his actions. By this he doth not stifle any good that is in him, but rather prunes the good tree from its superfluous, irregular shoots, taking care of and having an eye over it, that it may bring forth its fruit in due season.

3. And that we may be assured of so doing, we must, before all things, consider, that there is no true faith without repentance; so neither can there be any true boldness of faith, unless a man exercise himself daily in it. For the undauntedness of faith is no such groundless rashness, as is found in a wild soldier; but it is the fear of God, which, having taken possession of the heart, expels the fear of man; and where the spirit of man is truly humbled, and broken under the mighty hand of God, there the Spirit of God dwells and exerts itself so gloriously, that there is no room for the flesh to boast. Let no man deceive himself. There is no true faith, without holiness of heart and life. Whatever is separate from this, cannot last long, be the appearance of it ever so glorious.

4. Again, the true boldness of faith is known, by its continually working by love. By faith a man is made a lord over all; but by love, a servant of all. By faith he is a King; but by love, a spiritual Priest, ministering, not lording, in Christ's sanctuary. Now when a man doth not abide in love, but is swayed by anger, hatred, or the like, and perhaps breaking out in scoffing, railing or bitterness, he must not pretend to boldness of faith: And

though he may have had some degree of it before, it is now corrupted and lost. Therefore in this case, a man ought first to humble himself before God, and when he is sincerely renewed in the SPIRIT of his mind, then to press on again in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.

5. To keep up this boldness, we must continue in prayer, and in child-like communion with God: For by this, the mind is best guarded from vain excursions, and inspired with meekness towards all men. And whoever, by humble, fervent, and constant prayer, labours after a stricter union with God, will not only be fortified against all precipitancy and hastiness of spirit, but also against tempting God, of which men of little faith are particularly careful to caution him.

6. Neither does this boldness of faith at all interfere with the obedience which inferiors of every kind owe to their respective superiors; only remembering, that we are never to pay any one so unlimited, blindfold an obedience, as to prefer the authority of man before the clear command of God.

This caution is highly necessary; there being but too many who think they act entirely in faith, when indeed they are only following their own fancy, without any warrant from the word of God. And this distemper is the more dangerous, the less remedy can be applied to cure it. For those that “walk in the light of the fire of their own kindling,” if they are advised to true humility, discretion, and obedience, are apt to suspect that it proceeds from a design of lording over their consciences; and that all the advice given them is no better than the fruit of unbelief and the fear of man. They think themselves happy that they do not adhere to men; without taking notice how deep they are enslaved to themselves. But he is truly wise, who humbles himself more and more, and is always ready to submit to all men. For where humility is, the enemy finds no room for his most dangerous temptations.

7. Let us then continually join the exercise of daily

repentance, the denial of ourselves and of our own wills ; of true humility, obedience, submission, prayer ; of the meekness and patience of CHRIST, of hearty love for our brethren, and compassion for their failings ; and all other virtues that flow from the wisdom which cometh from above. Let us, I say, join and knit all these together with the cheerful exercise of faith and trust in God. Let us excite one another, with comfortable words, to cast off all fear of man. Wheresoever God hath wrought a good will, let us take heed of damping it in any of the least members of CHRIST : But let us cherish it by the word of the Gospel ; and by the rules of true Christian discretion, keep it within such bounds, as may bring it to a fuller and more substantial maturity.



CHAPTER VII.

*Of the Good which ariseth from the Boldness of Faith,
conquering the Fear of Man.*

1. THE eleventh chapter to the Hebrews lays an ample foundation for reflections on the glorious effects of faith, and on that power of God which hath at all times so exerted itself in true believers : But here it will be necessary to bid you take heed of making God changeable, by saying with the unbelieving world, ‘This indeed has been done formerly, but now miracles are ceased.’ For by this false maxim, suggested from the bottomless pit, the highest dishonour is thrown upon the living God : All his promises are made void, all the examples He hath set before our eyes are absolutely useless and impertinent ; yea, and all his calls and allurements to an active faith, are rendered null and insignificant. And whereas, in truth, we have none to blame but ourselves, for not treading in the same footsteps of faith in which the saints of old walked, and consequently, for not seeing the glory of God as they did,

we hereby cast all the blame upon God, and desire a difference of times ; whereas the difference, in reality, lies not in the times, but in the persons.

For though it cannot be said, that every believer now must do the very same works that were done by ABRAHAM or by MOSES, yet ought every one to “ follow the faith ” of these holy men, and to exert the same with full power and energy, in that state and condition wherein God hath placed him, and in those circumstances that daily offer ; and in so doing, he may be fully assured, that he (as well as they) shall see the glory of God. And with such a heart and mind are the Scriptures to be read, and the examples and glorious effects of faith to be considered ; that so we may receive strength and holy boldness, more nearly to unite ourselves with God, and to enjoy his infinite love and faithfulness in a more ample and abundant manner.

2. Now because faith, though it be so high and precious a gift of God, is not commonly esteemed according to its dignity, it is the more needful to observe what the Scripture throughout teacheth, That all the good which was ever wrought in the world by man, was done by faith, whereby men are so united to God, that “ all things are possible ” to them. Wherefore it is highly necessary, with all plainness and earnestness, to represent, not only to the world, but to the children of God too, that faith is something far more glorious than reason can conceive or express ; for till a man is sensible of this, he is utterly unable to comprehend what an inestimable treasure it brings with it. But when once he comes to know that it is the substance, *υποστας*, the ground and bottom of things hoped for, whereon, as an immoveable foundation, all the inconceivable goods we hope for, do rest, and an *ελεγχ*®, or convincing evidence and testimony of the SPIRIT, which assures us beyond all doubt of things not seen : I say, where faith is thus known and felt in a man’s heart, then he sees the advantage of that faith which overcometh all fear of man, and is of so large a compass, as to contain all, and more than all we can ask or think.

For then he discovers, that it is faith which delivers a man from all evil of soul and body, and on the other hand puts him in possession of sovereign bliss, and fills him with the fulness of God : Yea, and that whenever (either in the Old or New Testament) He would perform any thing great and glorious, He hath always employed those whom faith had set free from the slavish fear of man : A single man, setting aside the fear of flesh and blood, and going forth in the name of the living God, hath frequently saved a whole nation. And what was more remarkable in the Apostles, at their beginning to preach the Gospel, than their great boldness, at which the High-Priest, Scribes and Elders stood amazed ? And for this reason they are set before us as examples, teaching, by the victory of their faith, to confess CHRIST before all men without fear, and bear his cross, that we may partake of his glory.

END OF VOL. XXIX.

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